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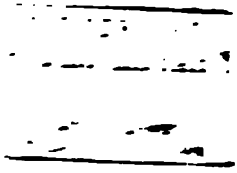
THE MONKS OF MELROSE

REV. W. G. ALLAN.



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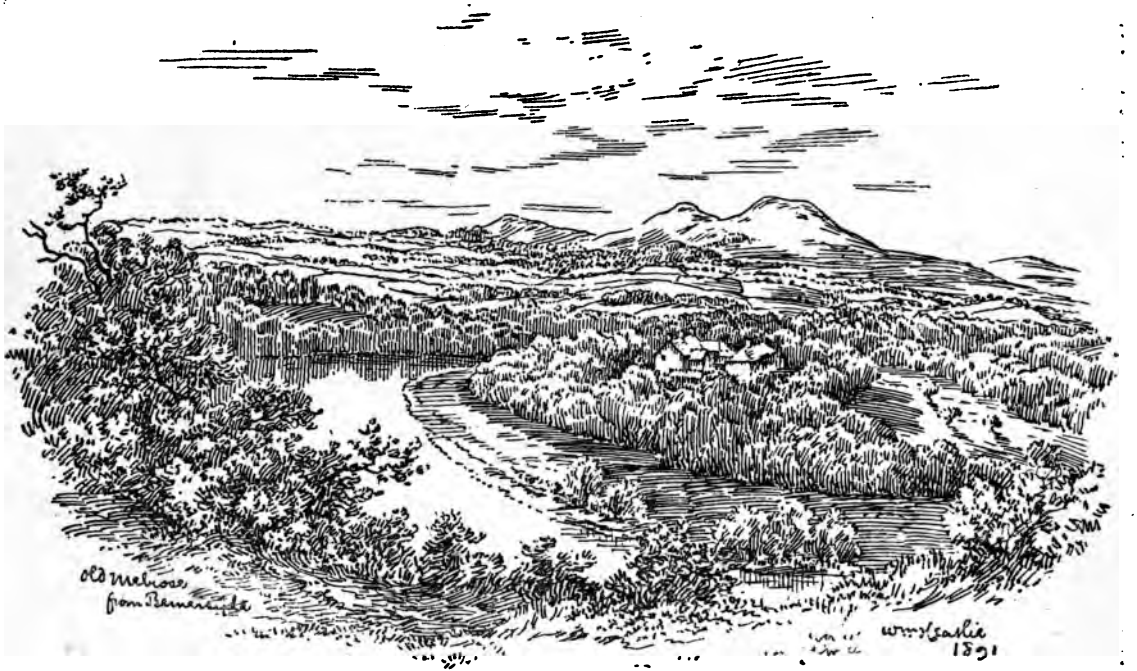
old Melrose
from Bemerside
Wm Leslie
1831

THE MONKS OF MELROSE:

PAPERS ON EARLY BORDER CHURCH HISTORY.

BY

REV. A. G. ALLAN, B.D.,

MINISTER OF MELROSE

"Whatsoever things are lovely think on these things"

EDINBURGH
JAMES PATON SOUTH
1910

THE MONKS OF MELROSE:

LECTURES ON EARLY BORDER CHURCH HISTORY,

BY THE

REV. W. G. ALLAN, B.D.,

EVANGELICAL UNION CHURCH, MELROSE.

"Whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things."

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PREFACE.

THESE Lectures were delivered on Sunday evenings in the beginning of this year. They proved interesting to many, and it was suggested would be welcomed by more, if reproduced in book form. It is with the desire to tell concisely the story of the planting and growth of early Christianity in our Borderland, to trace in broad lines through the shifting scenes of history "God's purpose working all things well," to show in a measure the reality of the spiritual life that must have existed in the past generations, and to promote the spiritual life of the present that they are now published.

The illustrations are by one who takes a deep interest in all matters, historical and religious, connected with the Abbey, and to whom I am indebted in many ways for information and suggestion.

W. G. L.

MELROSE,

December, 1891.

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ПОВКУВА
ВПВТІС
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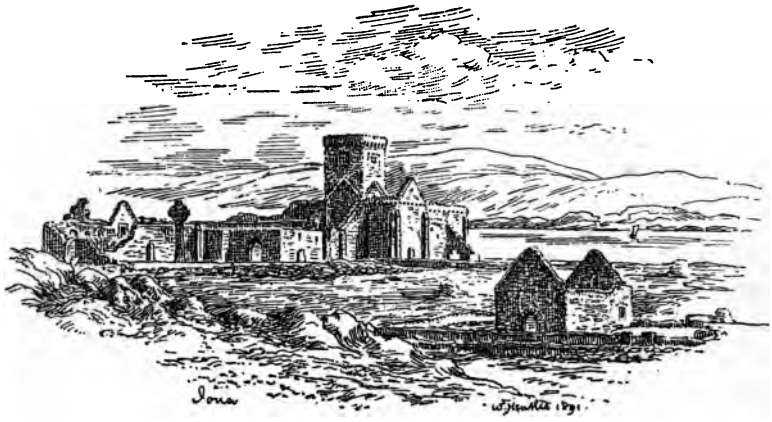
"*Called to be Saints.*"—St. Paul.

"*I am practically houseless, for my old straw hut in Uganda was sorely decayed when I left. I shall have to build myself a cot when I get back there. A very small place will do for my private wants, for I have no furniture, but I have to combine in one, medicine dispensary, printing office, tool store, barn, and schoolroom. . . . Such encumbrances are not needed to-day at a parson's house in England, but they once were when the first missionaries struggled against Saxon savagedom. By-and-by in Uganda, they will forget all about the primitive state in which the first missionaries had to live. Who cares anything in England about the poor men who did battle with Druidism in the name and strength of Christ? . . . I should like to see more interest taken in the dawn of Christianity in now Christian England.*"—Mackay of Uganda, p. 214.

"*It is an assured truth that, whenever the faculties of men are at their fullness, they* must *express themselves by art.*"—John Ruskin.



ST. AIDAN,

OR

THE COMING OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Remember them . . . which spake unto you the word of God, and, considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith—Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to day, yea and for ever."—HEB. XIII., 7, 8.

THESE words remind us of our indebtedness to the past. Though it is right that, in the words of Paul, we should "forget the things that are behind and press on towards those that are before," it is also right we should keep in grateful memory those who won for us our present enjoyment of civilization and culture, of religious life and liberty. We who

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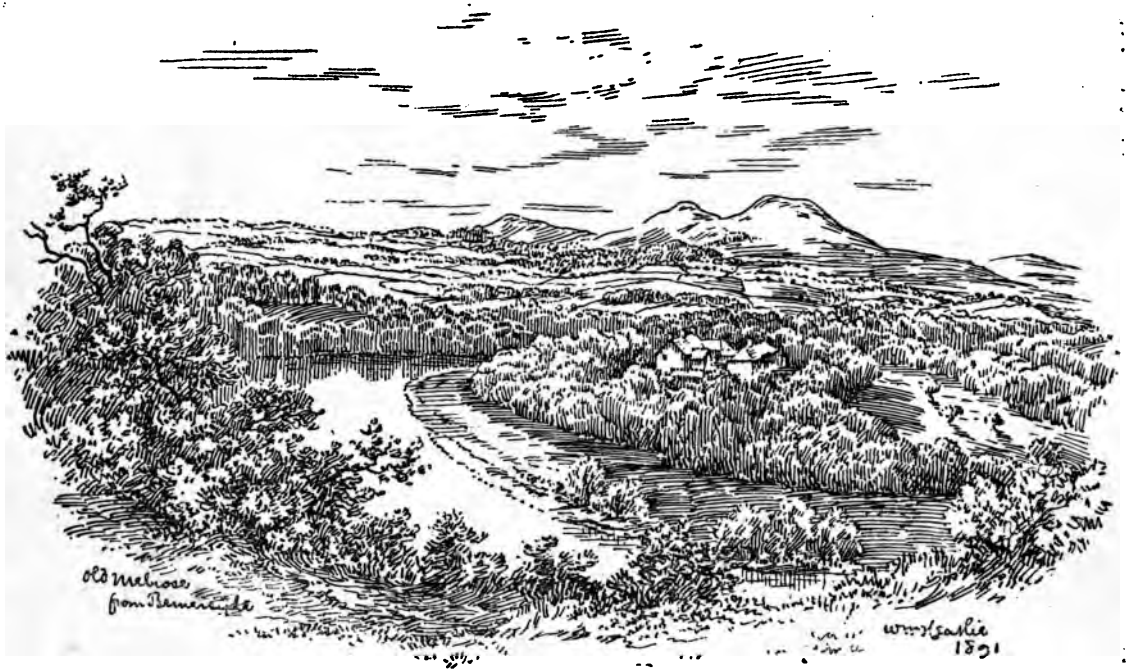

old Melrose
from Penielheugh
Wm Leslie
1851

became a light to the whole of western Christendom, sent forth its missionaries to Scotland and to England, and even to the continent of Europe beyond the snowy Alps. Independently of Rome, and latterly in opposition to her, the Irish Church maintained its life: the fervid impulsive nature of the Celt—with a larger share of the Apostle Peter's temperament than those who boasted they were his successors—was kindled to a zeal that braved all difficulties, and rendered unto God a most enthusiastic and a most enduring service.

It was from this source that the knowledge of the Gospel came to our province of Northumbria. The beacon light that blazed so brightly amid the storms of the Atlantic, lent its faggot to kindle another flame on the opposite shore of the North Sea. Iona was reproduced, on smaller scale yet similar lines, in Lindisfarne. For it was in Lindisfarne—that low, sandy, treeless island some eight miles down from the mouth of the Tweed—that the first Christian Church was founded in all the vast territory between Edinburgh and Hull, the Church that was destined to be the mother-church of countless cathedrals abbeys, priories, and convents in this district, that was to prove a mighty force in making the other kingdoms of England the kingdoms also of our Lord and of His Christ. It was there that Aidan built his home after the model of Columba his great master, and established that monastic system which flourished for more than a century of years.

The story of how Aidan was led to come to our side of the island is interesting. It sheds its tranquil light upon the turbulent disposition of the natives, and the kindly prudence of the saint. In the year 617, Oswald, Prince of Northumbria,

fled to Iona for his life. There he learned the truths of Christianity and was baptized. When in the battle of Heavenfield, near Hexham (A.D. 634), he regained his hereditary rights, he dealt the final blow to Paganism in the slaying of Cadwallon, "the last hero of the Briton race," and raised the cross, to which he said he owed his victory, to its rightful place as the pledge of triumph over evil, and the symbol of life in the midst of death. During the wise, manly reign on which he now entered, he strove to impart to his subjects the new faith he had received. Back to Iona he dispatched an appeal for help, but the first monk who was sent him, failed signally to accomplish any good, and soon returned to the monastery with a doleful tale, that the people were nothing else than "stubborn and untameable barbarians." There was sadness in the synod of the fathers as they listened to his report, for they were averse to let this clear opportunity slip, anxious to enter the doorway thus providentially opened, to new fields of missionary labour. At length one of their number rose and quietly addressed the discomfited preacher:—"It seems to me, my brother, you have been too hard upon these ignorant people: you have not, according to apostolic counsel, offered them first the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees, while nourishing them with the divine word, to the true understanding and practice of the more advanced precepts." All eyes were turned upon the speaker in critical expectation. His views were asked and deliberated on. Finally, it was judged that he possessed the discernment and the prudence he had found wanting in his brother Corman, and the Synod decided he should at once take up the mission. It is one thing to point out errors or defects,

another thing to remedy them. Aidan, however, was capable. He was quiet and retiring, so that of his life before this important speech we know absolutely nothing. Evidently he was one who thought more than he spoke: his opinion was considered with deference: he was trusted, and proved worthy of the trust. A few days afterwards he was consecrated bishop of Northumbria, and set out with several monks of Iona in his train, over the dark Atlantic waves, and across the bleak, wild Caledonian mainland to his new sphere of service.

These events took place in the year 635. It is only through the long vista of the centuries that we can look back upon the saint and examine the features of his character. Usually the past "wins a glory by its being far," and the imperfections of a hero's portrait are often washed out by his enthusiastic worshippers: but in the present case we have the near testimony of the Venerable Bede to guide us—a historian who was born within a few years after Aidan's death, and who, besides being admittedly careful and honest in his statements, is more likely to be prejudiced against, rather than in favour of the Saint, because of the divergent views they held upon the Easter question. Bede never tires of praising Aidan; paints him uniformly as a man of nobility and simplicity, of humble faith and untiring zeal. He was a pontiff "of the greatest kindness, piety, and self-restraint," a saint worthy of the name. Though ordained a bishop, he continued a plain monk, and ruled his brethren not by the "insolence of office," but by the superiority of forceful character. On arriving in the country of his adoption, he refused to set up his monastic capital at York, though the

king's palace and the seat of government were there, and chose instead the melancholy Lindisfarne. His mode of life corresponded with the simplicity of his home. He fed upon the plainest fare. During his rule, and for more than a century after he departed, wine and beer were totally unknown on the island. Along with his monks he fasted twice a week, namely on Wednesdays and Fridays, up till *nones* or three o'clock in the afternoon. To worldly wealth he was utterly indifferent. The nobles who paid him visits from the mainland, he entertained with all the hospitality the monastery could afford: with the king he lived on most familiar terms: the gifts of both king and nobles he bestowed again in charity, or spent in the ransoming of slaves. Presents of land he appropriated to himself, only however, to the extent of a site large enough to build a church upon, along with a small "prophet's chamber" to accommodate him on his passing visits. There is a pleasant homely story told of him, which, to those that have eyes to see, reveals more than is apparent on the surface. King Oswyn, who succeeded Oswald on the throne, presented him once with a fine horse richly caparisoned, that he might use upon his frequent wanderings over moorland and through river. A poor man met him on his way and asked an alms. Straightway he dismounted and presented the beggar with the horse, adorned as it was. Naturally the king remonstrated: "What meanest thou, Lord Bishop? Were there not poorer horses, or other less costly gifts to bestow upon a beggar?" We can see the ready wit, the simplicity, the earnestness of the man in his reply: "What sayest thou, king? Is yon son of a mare more precious in thy sight than yon son of God?" The historian

proceeds to tell how the King pondered the bishop's words, and, before sitting down to dine, fell on his knees to ask his pardon. "No more shall I speak of it," said he, "and never more regret anything of mine that thou givest to the children of God." Later on, in private, Aidan remarked with the tears starting in his eyes, "I know now that the king will not live long: never until now have I beheld a king so humble, and this nation is not worthy such a prince." The sad prediction of the Saint proved only, alas, too true.

A trifling incident! yet characteristic, and therefore a loophole through which we of the nineteenth century may obtain a wide, far reaching view of our forefathers in the seventh. Surely no one will condemn it as coarse. In the judgment of Montalembert, "it forms a perfect picture: it discloses in these barbarous times a sweetness of sentiment, a delicacy of conscience, a refinement of manners, which, more than knowledge, was the sign of Christian civilization." Besides, it discloses the secret of the Saint's success. It betrays the quickness of his Irish temperament, but there is a quietness also that betokens habitual self-control: for, unlike Columba the impetuous and passionate, he could keep a tight rein upon his impulse. It reveals something of the charm that lay in his personality, and that soon won him friends, his willingness to appreciate the good in all he met, his ready sympathy for others that lost sight of self. It testifies a straightforwardness that knew no respect of persons, but regarded all men, from the highest to the lowest, "sons of the one God," proves him worthy of Bede's high encomium, "he was the father and the worshipper of the poor."

Round such a high-souled and devoted leader there gathered many willing helpers and scholars. Some joined him year by year from the mother-monastery of Iona, to whose superiorship he still observed obedience. Some of the slaves he had ransomed, offered themselves in gratitude for its kindness. From among these pupils he selected twelve, to whom he gave a special training, and that his judgment did not play him false is proved by the after career of most of these favourites. Eata succeeded him at Lindisfarne, the two brothers, Chad and Cedd, became the evangelists of southern England, Wilfrid rose to be the most famous churchman of the following generation. Thus, unlike the Roman Paulinus, he made permanent his work, for he both pursued it diligently and organized it. He laid greatstress on education, he believed men must love God with all their mind as well as all their heart. He paid special attention to the children in this regard. Every church and monastery that he planted became a school, where, as Bede tells us, the boys were taught study and discipline by Scotch preceptors.

To us in Tweeddale, there is one religious house he founded that makes his memory sacred. Wishing to have an outpost in his diocese that might serve as a resting-place or half-way house between Lindisfarne and Iona, that might be used also as a school for the training of novices, and a station for the extension of the faith in the surrounding district, he selected as the most desirable and suitable site, the promontory familiar to us all by its later name of Old Melrose. A lovelier spot and one better fitted for prayerful meditation and the quiet growth of the religious spirit he could not have found. Sheltered from

the winds of heaven and shut in from the intrusive foot of worldly men by the rocky scaur of Bemersyde, it is a monastery of Nature's own devising: embosomed in the rich green woods, almost encircled by the river Tweed, whose silver stream is here darkened by the depths of its pools and the shadow of the rock above, it is a temple in which the mind is raised from Nature up to Nature's God, is filled at once with restful peace and humble adoration. In this secluded nook, sometime after the year 635, he erected a religious house, which received and educated many saintly men, of whom we need only mention Boisil, the first prior, whose name lives to this day in the name of the neighbouring town St Boswells; Eata, his own successor in Lindisfarne, and the great St. Cuthbert. Not long after its foundation it gave a colony of monks to Ripon in Yorkshire. For two centuries it remained the home of holy influences, was burned down by Kenneth II, in 839, and lay long in ruins. After its restoration, it was handed over to its more pretentious sister, Melrose Abbey in 1136, but it continued down to the fifteenth century to attract numbers of pilgrims to its sanctuary on the Chapel Knowe. From its lowly doors there stepped firmly forth those pious missionaries, who hazarded their lives across the hills and up the dales, braving the dangers of trackless waste and flooded stream, of wild boar and wolf and savage men, that they might cheer the hearts of our benighted forefathers with their glad gospel message. What we owe to its foundation eternity alone will reveal. There are results that cannot be measured by scales or calculated in cold figures, results that earthly records (did we possess them of that time) would take no note of, results however, that are marked in

God's Book of Life, and that by their subtle spiritual influence tell upon the country's history. The founding of Old Melrose by St. Aidan was the coming of Christianity, with all that that implies, to the valleys of the Tweed and its tributary streams.

It is remarkable that few miracles are recorded of our saint. There is only one which I have met with. The cruel Penda of Mercia had resumed his assaults upon Northumbria, and in his siege of Bamborough, the royal fortress, had set fire to an enormous pile of wood, in hopes that the west wind, blowing strongly at the time, would carry the flames over the ramparts to the town. Aidan was engaged in prayer in the solitude of Farne, when he beheld the black smoke and jets of flame covering the city on the mainland. Instinctively he raised his hands to Heaven and cried: "My God, see all the evil Penda does to us." At the same moment the wind changed, the flames whirled round on the besiegers, destroying many, and they speedily abandoned a place so evidently under divine protection.

It was not long after this incident that St. Aidan died. In the course of one of his missionary expeditions through the country he fell sick. His attendants hastily sent up a tent to shelter him, and there he breathed his last, his head leaning against the buttress of a modest church he had just built. The year was 651, the day, the 31st of August, fitly designated in the calendars, "Aidan's Rest," *Quies Aidani*. His death was strangely harmonious with his whole life. With no rapturous death-bed scene, for he was ever a retiring man; away from home, for he counted himself a stranger and a pilgrim on the

earth; under a temporary shelter, for he had but little he could call his own; by the side of his work, for he loved his labour; quietly, for his power lay in silent force of character, not in boisterous display of energy. "After he had served his own generation by the will of God, he fell on sleep."

Upon such a man we need pronounce no eulogy: the story of his life is luminous in itself and radiant. Again, after mentioning his death, does Bede break forth in praise of his inestimable worth. He thus concludes—"He was the first holy man the Northumbrians had ever seen who practised what he taught. In short, he was careful not to neglect any duty which he had learnt from the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles and Prophets, but to put every one in practice with all his might." His works do follow him. The achievements of the Celtic mission he established in the isle of Lindisfarne, bear abundant and eloquent testimony to the thoroughness he must have ained at in his personal labours, and the enthusiastic zeal he must have aroused in others. Through the agency of his disciples, practically all England, except the small section of Kent which Augustine retained for Roman influence, was evangelized. Wessex and East Anglia, Essex and Mercia, soon yielded to the perseverance and prudence of these Northumbrian monks. Sussex, the last to surrender, was won by Wilfrid, one of the favourite pupils of our saint. Well might the late Bishop Lightfoot of Durham say concerning him—"Augustine was the Apostle of Kent, but Aidan was the Apostle of England."

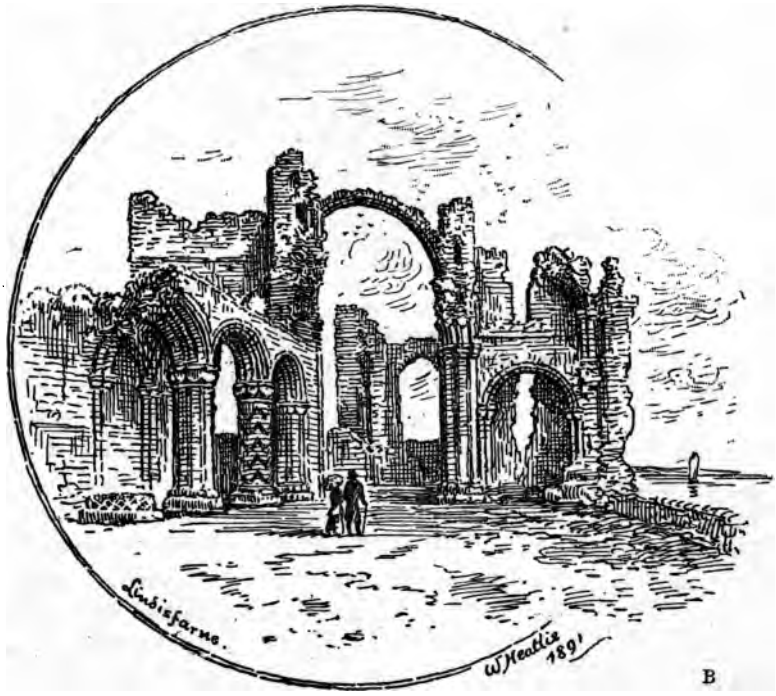
And well may we remember our kinship in religious history with our Southern neighbours, long, alas, more our enemies than

our friends: and well may we remember our indebtedness to Iona and the fervent zeal of the missionaries from Ireland's isle. Then if we trace back our chain of causes far enough, we come to the early Apostles of the Church and to Him, who in His single personality was the inspiration of them all, Jesus of Galilee—to Him whose claims to be the Messiah, Son of God, those humble lives, spent after His example, sustained by His indwelling power, those moral victories that first freed the land from the bonds of a superstitious and a cruel heathenism, victories which He Himself predicted, most effectually substantiate. His servants may pass away from this earth, their memory be forgotten. To St. Aidan only a few churches have been dedicated, even in the scene of his most arduous toil. His name is known in these parts only to a few readers of antiquity and history. Yet do not he and all his faithful fellow-labourers whose names never did become historical, share that immortality which belongs to those

> ". . . . . Who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end in self."

Is it not our barest duty, when we reflect how much we owe to Christianity, how mighty the difference it has made to our country; when we recollect the difficulties the pioneers must have encountered in their efforts to teach our rude forefathers that God in Heaven loved them, to remember our debt to them who first preached to us the word of God: and finally when we realize that the time for us is short, when we desire not to be entirely useless in our day and generation but rather to perform

some service for His sake that will abide when we too are gone, ought we not to "consider the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, yea and forever?" This is our consolation and our confidence that whatever may happen to His servants, He Himself abides, that their work of faith and labour of love, unnoticed by men, are not forgotten by Him, cannot therefore lose their reward or prove useless in His hands towards the fulfilling of His redemptive purposes for mankind.



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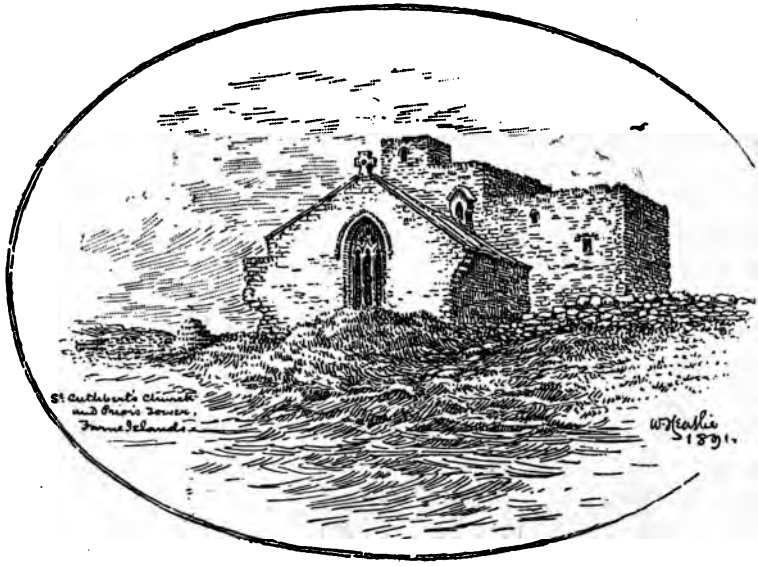


ST. CUTHBERT,
THE MONK OF OLD MELROSE.

"Behold an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile."—JOHN i., 47.

SUCH were the words of Holy Writ with which good Prior Boisil saluted a young lad of fifteen years, who presented himself one day in the year 651, at the door of Old Melrose sanctuary, and asked admission. It was Cuthbert, the shepherd boy from the banks of the Leader, and

the greeting with which the holy father hailed him, strikes at once the key-note of his life. Like Nathanael of old, he was retiring in nature and simple in character, from first to last. Already he was given to thought and meditation. Soon he was to prove himself an Israelite indeed—a wrestler with God, a prince who should prevail, one who would have the promises which Jesus made to the newly-found disciple, of "seeing greater things than these," fulfilled in a career of single-hearted service to the glory of God and the good of man. In his character there is absolutely nothing of the Jacob, the deceiver, the supplanter. He possessed that purity of heart which enabled him to see God, that single-mindedness which made him stable in all his ways, that humility which commended him to heaven, that love which drew to him his fellow-men. If his portrait be painted, it ought to be in quiet colours and in uniformity of tone.

It was in 637 that he was born, two years after Bishop Aidan had crossed from Iona to Northumbria—one year, more or less, after the monastery of Old Melrose had been founded. Some writers claim Ireland as his birthplace, from which his mother, a royal princess, is said to have despatched him while an infant, to escape the fury of the King of Connaught. Others, with more probability, give this honour to Wrangholm, a village that existed between Brotherstone and Smailholm till within the memory of some of the oldest inhabitants of the district, but whose site is marked in the present day by a few picturesque old ash trees. It is in this neighbourhood at least, we find him first, an orphan, brought up by a pious widow, whose care he acknowledged in later life by paying her a visit as often as his

missionary expeditions led him in this direction, and once, by saving, through the efficacy of his sainted prayer, her homestead and the whole village indeed, from a devouring fire. When he was a boy, he lived as a boy. Gifted with a remarkably strong body, he delighted in all healthy games of running, leaping and wrestling, and at eight years surpassed all his companions in agility and endurance, being left sole challenger upon the field when all the rest were wearied out. Still, as a boy, he was not permitted to forget his higher vocation. One day, a child of three years old kept calling to him, "Oh, do be quiet, and leave off this foolish play." Cuthbert paid no heed. The child persisted in his cry, and at length burst into a fit of sobbing, utterly inconsolable. "Oh, Cuthbert," then he said, "holy bishop and priest, these tricks of agility are quite unsuitable to your character and position." The future saint, it is written, kept these words, like Mary, and pondered them in his heart.

It may be a legend, but it indicates what we have no doubt is a fact, that the youth showed early signs of his religious disposition, and found in his boyhood the contradiction which we all come to experience, between living to the things of the body and the world on the one hand, and living unto God. His precocious piety was not sentimental or formal. It was sincere and natural, and grew along with him. His meditative tendency was fostered by the pursuit of shepherding, as young David's was while he watched the flock by Bethlehem. One night, as he lifted up his prayer upon the lone hillside, he saw the black canopy of sky above him rent suddenly in twain, and a stream of brilliant light fall athwart the heavens, like the

ladder of glory in Jacob's dream. The angelic host came forth, descended to the earth and thence returned, bearing in their company a resplendent soul, whom they had gone to meet. Was it a vision of the mind, was it a flight of meteors? Such questioning is bootless. To Cuthbert it was the revelation of the Almighty, the call to a holy life and service. When next morning he learned that Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, the apostle of the district, had died during the night, he determined to dedicate himself as a worker in his vineyard and a labourer in his harvest. Christ had beheld him in his solitude, as he did Nathanael of old; for where the heart and mind are seeking Christ, there Christ is ready to be found; though the heart be a boy's heart, and the life hitherto a boy's life, there He is ready to reveal the future usefulness and the never-fading glory. Cuthbert "was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," but shortly afterwards bade farewell to his mother as he called her, and his playmates, forded his way across the Tweed, and offered himself as a novice to Abbot Eata and Prior Boisil of Old Melrose.

Whether in his first fervour he harboured an ambition to fill Aidan's place or not, we cannot tell. It is unlikely, to judge from his backwardness of disposition. He was anxious only to learn and to serve. Into the habits of the cloister he threw himself with characteristic energy. The same dislike of being outrivalled by his fellows, which he had manifested in his games, he carried into his religious exercises. He surpassed his brother monks, as he had done his old companions, no longer now in sport, but in the harder task of wrestling with himself and with the evil one, in performance of manual

labour, in study of the gospels, in endurance of fasting, of vigil, and of prayer. The strong constitution he had gained by his rustic life and healthy amusements was now severely tested. To extinguish the fires of passion in the flesh, he bathed in Tweed though the ice was thick upon it, and sometimes passed whole nights praying within the frozen water. To him such penances were no mockery, they were the "discipline that enduring but for a moment was to work out the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" in the world to come. He was no idle, selfish, sentimental hermit. He worked as well as prayed; prayer with all its austere accompaniments was but the preparation for work. After his novitiate was concluded, his cell saw almost less of him than did the hills and dales of the whole country-side. He was not only a monk but also a missionary. "He sometimes passed weeks and months together out of his monastery, preaching to and confessing the rustic population of the mountains. Not a village was so distant, not a mountain side so steep, not a cottage so poor, that it escaped his zeal."

It is this jewel in his saintly crown, that makes it shine so brilliantly. To him, again we say, salvation was no matter of mere selfishness, for emphatically he gave himself for others. With him, religion did not wear that mean and sordid aspect we are accustomed to observe, and rightly to condemn in the monks of the Roman Catholic Church; *it was a calling not to happiness so much as to service.* The enterprise, the endurance, the devotion, with which he carried out his high ideal, can scarcely be estimated by us in this improved and comfortable age. The face of the landscape was more uncouth in its appearance then than

now, if not altogether savage: little else, we should imagine, than a vast moorland waste, save in the isolated spots, where a few families gathered together for mutual protection against wild animals and wilder men, or where a freebooter had ensconced his hut to fold his sheep and store his plunder. Roads for a horse to pass over there were almost none, so that the saint was forced to make most of his toilsome way on foot. Ignorance and superstition were still rampant, and the people, though Christian in name, were still heathen in nature. Sickness and misfortune they looked upon as signs of Heaven's wrath; at every judgment on their families or their flocks, they returned to their idolatry, their magic, and their charms; at every accident which befel the Christians they exulted, because they said by these new-fangled notions their old gods had been displeased.

With pity and with patience did Cuthbert enter on his task as gospel-pioneer. He did not confine his labours to the valley of the Tweed. Far and wide he roamed, by land and sea he made his way. From the Solway in the south, where his name is recalled in Kirkcudbright (Kirkcudbercht or the Kirk of Cuthbert), northwards to the Forth, and even it is narrated, to Athole in Strath Tay, he plodded, in his love for men and his zeal for Christ. Many hardships he must have sustained from hunger and exposure to the cold, and the legends of his life are full of the miraculous ways in which he was supported on his travels. One day it was an eagle who catered for his mid-day meal, and yielded up the fish he had caught to Cuthbert's servant. "But," said the man of God. "why have you not left our fisherman his share?" The young lad cut the fish in two and gave one half to the eagle, the other they boiled at the first

house they reached, eating of it themselves and sharing it with the family. Having had enough, "they prayed to the Lord and returned thanks, and continued their journey on the mountains."

Thus he won the hearts of the rough natives by his devotion, his thoughtfulness, and zeal. "The common people heard him gladly," for he was one of themselves, requiring no interpreter as Aidan had done, but speaking their own language, acquainted with their humble ways of life by personal experience. In the populous centres, old and young crowded round him, spell-bound by his eloquence, subdued by his authority, the most rebellious and most wicked overcome by his persuasiveness to confess their sins and accept the penance he imposed upon them.

This busy life continued for fourteen years, from 651 to 664, save for a short while, when, with the Abbot Eata and a number of his brother monks, he sojourned in the Yorkshire monastery of Ripon. The zeal, however, of Wilfrid, the champion of the Roman and the enemy of the Celtic modes of worship, forced the devoted disciples of Columba to withdraw, and they returned to the banks of Tweed. Shortly after (in 664), when Boisil was cut off by the great pestilence that raged, Cuthbert was elected Prior in his place.

A higher and a wider field of service at this juncture opened up for him. He had not exercised his priorship in Melrose long, when he was appointed to the same post in Lindisfarne, the monastic capital of Northumbria. It is with that neighbourhood rather than with this we live in, that his name is generally associated, for there he spent the remainder of his life, for twelve years in the monastery Aidan founded,

eleven on the rock of Farne close by. Into his new duties he threw himself with the same holy fervour and large-hearted sympathy, he had displayed in his humbler service. It was a difficult post he had to fill, because of the ecclesiastical war that was being waged between the Irish and the Roman Church, regarding the correct manner of the tonsure, and the proper date of the Easter festival. Trivial subjects these to us, they were most momentous to our forefathers. It was because Wilfrid had triumphed in the Synod of Whitby, that Bishop Colman had fled from Lindisfarne rather than submit to the Synod's decrees, and that Eata had been summoned from Melrose to occupy the episcopal chair in his stead. Eata's prior, Cuthbert, had his own share to do in promoting harmony in the divided house, and enforcing discipline among his brethren. He succeeded by adopting gentleness where harshness would have failed. He did not command, he persuaded: when like to lose his temper, he left the chamber, to renew the argument by the same kindly means next day. Strict with himself, he was indulgent to his subordinates, the severe regulations he laid down for his own conduct, he softened in the case of others. His personal holiness he cultivated as earnestly as ever, keeping under his body by means of the same austerities he had practised in the cloister of Old Melrose. Such asceticism did not make him, as we might expect, censorious and sour; on the contrary, it caused the highest Christian graces to bloom forth in fragrance and in beauty. It is expressly noted by his biographer, that despite his rigorous chastisement of the flesh, he was "happy and cheerful every hour of the day." The secret was, he was so absorbed in his Master as to lose sight of self;

he could echo the profound words of the Apostle, "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me." At the sacrament, writes Bede, the historian, "he imitated the Lord's passion which he commemorated, by offering himself a sacrifice to God in contrition of heart," and the people were moved to tears by the depth of feeling they beheld in him. Towards the sinful and suffering, who resorted to him for spiritual comfort or temporal help, he manifested the same intensity of emotion, taking up the case of each with fullest sympathy. In those beyond the sound of the gospel, he preserved the liveliest interest, joyously spent his time and strength in journeying to the most distant nooks, to administer relief to the body where he was able, but especially to bring the life eternal to the soul. In such laborious, yet withal such simple fashion, did the years of his priorship in Lindisfarne speed their way.

Still he was not satisfied. Notwithstanding the strictness of his discipline, he felt its insufficiency. So lofty was his conception of what God required of him, so earnest his desire to realise it, that he determined to deny himself still more. Had not the Master said, "If thou wouldst be perfect sell all that thou hast?" There were personal comforts he would abjure, that nothing might be lacking in his self-consecration unto Christ. Accordingly in the year 676, when he was thirty-nine, he withdrew himself from his companions in the monastery, and made his solitary home upon a rock, small and barren, which rose from out the water a short distance off. On landing there, he hollowed out a cell, from which he could see nothing save a patch of sky, in order that, undisturbed by worldly things, he might steadfastly contemplate heavenly joys. At the en-

trance he hung up an ox-hide curtain to shelter him from the North sea blast, which blows oftentimes with such fury on these islands, that they are associated in our minds with many shipwrecks—especially with the heroic story of Grace Darling, who at the risk of her own life rescued the sailors of the *Forfarshire* from a watery grave. His only means of support was a patch of barley, which he sowed and harvested with his own hands. The dwellers on the shore, incredulous at its scantiness, declared he was fed by angels with bread made in Paradise. Fish and birds were plentiful; but, though no vegetarian on principle, his kindly nature made him cherish rather than destroy these creatures of God's hand. His gentleness towards all animals in fact is one of the finest traits in his whole hermit life. The legends tell how, as a servant of God, he regained that dominon over the creatures, which man received at first and lost through sin. Two ravens, for example, whom he had rebuked for some offence, came trembling to his feet, and with bending necks and wings outspread, most humbly asked his pardon. Other birds he petted, shielding them in his bosom from the storm, sharing with them his frugal fare, teaching them a trust in man, which the depredations of sportsmen for these many centuries have not removed. St. Cuthbert's duck, or the eider duck, still builds its nest in the crannies of the hermit's isle; Farne is the only place in Britain where to-day it can be found.

We must not suppose the interest of the recluse was confined to birds and fish alone, that he forgot his brother man in his concentration upon himself, or that he condemned the life of laymen in the world as unchristian or irreligious because different from his own. To the monks he left behind in Lindis-

farne, he was most considerate and kindly; to the spiritually anxious, who were attracted by his holy fame from all parts of the kingdom, he proved himself the "friend of God and skilled in healing human suffering." No one departed from his cell carrying with him the burden that he brought. For all, when they beheld the genuine love of such a man, found it easier to believe also in the love of God in heaven; and he, by his very power of sympathy, so understood their need that he could adapt his words of consolation, of rebuke, and of instruction, to suit each sorrow-laden heart. Nor was he puffed up with pride, as hermits are often apt to be. He did not boast himself in any way superior to ordinary members of the monk's community. "It must not be supposed," he said, "because I prefer to live out of the reach of every secular care, that my life is better than that of others. The life of good monks, who obey their abbots in everything, and whose time is divided between prayer, work and fasting, is much to be admired. I know many among them whose souls are more pure, and their graces more exalted than mine; especially, and in the first rank, my dear old Boisil, who received me and trained me at Melrose in my youth."

Nine years (676-684) did Cuthbert pass in that loved solitude of Farne, and live his Nathanael-like life of pious meditation, without guile. He had no wish to be anything other than he was, no ambition now, whatever he may have cherished in his youth, to fill the place of Aidan, the vision of whose soul being carried up to heaven by the angels had been God's call to him. Some men have greatness thrust upon them; the humblest are usually the most deserving of high honour, the most capable of trying work. Cuthbert was not hidden in his

seclusion, nor his abilities forgotten by the Church. Ecclesiastical preferment was pressed on his acceptance. He was offered the see of Hexham, but refused it; and pleaded that instead it should be given to his old abbot, Eata. He was offered the see of Lindisfarne; the king and the nobles of Northumbria entreated him upon their knees to take it. He consented only on one condition, that he was allowed to spend one winter more within his sea-girt cell. At length he bade farewell to it, and on Easter Day, March 26th, 685, was consecrated Bishop in the Cathedral of York, that the prophecy of his child-companion on the hills of Leader might be fulfilled.

From what we have already learned of his character, we may easily guess in what manner he wielded his episcopal power. In style of living he remained a monk, with no palace, or retinue of servants, or luxurious habits such as the great Wilfrid had adopted. In the discharge of his duties he remained a missionary, rejoicing only in his larger opportunity of service. His alms-giving, his healing, his preaching proceeded as in the days of old. From York he journeyed as far west as Carlisle, and penetrated to the parts where the Picts and Britons still existed, exposed to many dangers, sometimes sleeping in a tent or beneath a shelter made of boughs plucked from the neighbouring forest, yet nothing daunted in his purpose of telling to all whom he could reach, the story of God's love for man.

Labours like these soon told upon his constitution, strong though it originally was. He held his bishopric only for nine months. In January, 686, he felt he must resign his office, betook himself to his cave in Farne once more, and died where he had loved to live. During the two months of pain that he

endured, he prepared himself for his last journey, took affectionate farewell of all the brethren who crowded in tears around his bed, and exhorted them to lives of peace and of humility. Soon speech failed him. In silence he partook of the last sacrament. Then, raising his eyes and arms up to heaven, towards which his life had been one long aspiration, he gave back his soul to God. It was the 20th March, 687, and he was but fifty years of age.

The story of Cuthbert is not ended with his death. According to a strange foreboding he had himself expressed, his dust was not allowed to rest in quietness. His disciples held it far too dear to allow the marauding Danes to gain possession of it. So, when forced to flee from an attack of the fierce Norsemen on their monastery, they snatched up their precious treasure, and carried it on their shoulders, patiently awaiting some divine sign of a resting-place. Their wanderings would fill a volume.

"O'er northern mountain, marsh and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose,
But though alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For wondrous tale to tell,
In his stone-coffin forth he rides—
A ponderous bark for river-tides—
Yet light as gossamer it glides
Downward to Tillmouth cell.
Then after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There deep in Durham's Gothic shade
His relics are in secret laid."

Even then his influence had not come to an end. For long he exercised a posthumous power by the fame of his sainted memory. Not only did he attract men and gifts to the church so that the see became the richest benefice in England, the richest but one in all Christendom; but also, as the legends tell, he saved many of the poor and the oppressed by miraculous interpositions in their favour, and as proof positive proclaims, secured the privileges of sanctuary to all who fled for refuge to his shrine, and clasped the massive ring that still adorns the door of the cathedral.

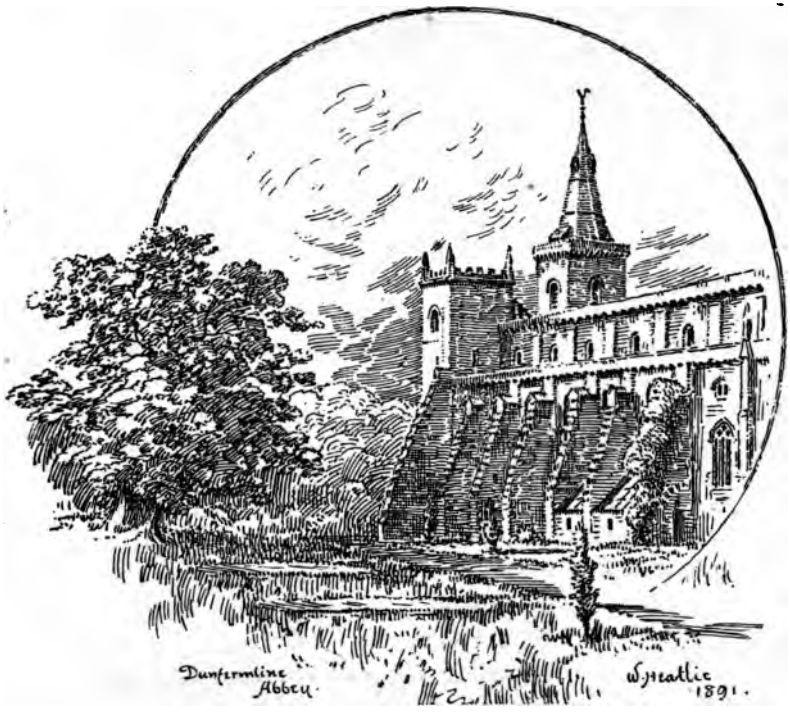
Thus lived and died Cuthbert, the monk of Old Melrose, the hermit of Farne, the missionary of Northumbria, the saint of God. It is currently reported that no man knows the precise place of his burial. It matters not. His memory is preserved in many holy houses dedicated to his honour, in the traditions of the shepherds on the hills and the sailors by the seashore. After so uneventful a career, we may marvel at the glory that attends him, and may ask the cause. He was not a great writer like Bede, he was not the first herald of the gospel as was Aidan, he was not a powerful ecclesiastic like Wilfrid. He was bishop only for a few months at longest, he was a plain monk and missionary. It is in himself, and not in his circumstances or surroundings that the reason is to be found. Yet again, we cannot call him brilliant. He was not grand and lofty in his heroism like Aidan; he was not born to shine in kingly courts or churchly councils like Wilfrid. He is a hero of a homelier type than these. The story of his life in the history of the seventh century is like a quiet resting-place, far from the gaudy mansions of the great, the din as well of

theological as of civil strife, situated in the country, among the peasants with their humble ways, their honest ignorance, their healthy love of good despite of all their sin. He is a man who certainly would have risen had he followed any worldly calling, for God had endowed him richly both in body and in mind. Besides by nature he was kindly and amiable, gifted with an undefinable intensity which made him enter thoroughly into all he undertook, and left him without a rival among his contemporaries in the village wrestling, in the religious exercises, in the battle of life. He had received many talents, he rendered them all back with usury. The secret of his glory is to be found in his unaffected, single-hearted devotion unto God. We do not grudge him the title of saint: he is worthy to be ranked high in the goodly fellowship of the apostles and martyrs and followers of the Lord. He reminds us of Nathanael in his guilelessness, of Peter in his intensity, of Paul in his untiring zeal, of John in his abounding love. One was his master, even Christ.

We may not approve all his notions of austerity and mortification of the flesh; we must absolve him from all the hypocrisy and Pharisaical pride that disgraced the anchorites and monks of later days; we praise his burning desire to save others as well as to be saved himself. We honour him because with all his native ability, he sought not his own things, but the things of God and of his fellowmen. We honour him for his constancy and perseverence, above all for the humility that kept him, the strong man, childlike unto the end. "Bury me by the cross," he said, upon his death-bed, referring to a wooden cross he had erected with his own hands near to his cell, "in this

spot I would fain repose, where I have fought my little battle for the Lord, where I desire to finish my course, and from whence I hope that my merciful Judge will call me to the crown of righteousness." We rejoice that we can claim the association of so lofty and so pure a soul with our district; we must acknowledge our debt to him as formerly also to St. Aidan, for all the good he accomplished, and the greater good which he prepared for.

O, Jesus Christ, thou art our Saviour as Thou wast his, do thou dwell in our hearts each one, and work in us these same fruits of obedience, self-denial, humility and love, and Thine shall ever be the glory. Amen.



ST. DAVID,

OR

THE FOUNDING OF THE ABBEYS.

"The Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He."—DEUT. XXXII., 4.

THE Book of History is the Bible of Providence. The common belief in Providence identifies its working with mere chance or good luck. Many persons recognise God's

God's hand only in these events that unexpectedly fall out according to their private desire, as for instance, when they are relieved in distress, or saved from accident. When, however, we consider the biography of nations, and cast our eyes over the course of the centuries, we cannot rest satisfied with this "peddling" view of Providence as it has well been called. God is ever at work, sustaining men, moulding men upon the never-ceasing wheel of time, as the potter moulds his clay. He has to do with peoples as well as individuals, is active in the dark ages as truly as in the years of Reformation. He is the Rock, the Permanent, the Immovable One amid the ceaseless changes of Time, the revolutions of society. One generation cometh and another goeth but the sovereign God abides, accomplishing his own purposes, compelling the trivial incidents, the evil thoughts, the foolishness, the wrath of man to praise Him by contributing ultimately to His glory. There is no age of a nation's history in which we may not discern His presence and His power, no age in which He is not educating his children according to their receptivity, to higher stages of manhood and fuller knowledge of Himself.

"The old order changeth, giving place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

Let us therefore, keeping in mind the fact that He is a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, 'remember the days of old when the Most High gave to the peoples their inheritance, and separated the children of men in our own land, when He set the bounds of the peoples according to the number of the children of His Israel,' (v. 7, 8.) By such a retrospect of His dealings with our fathers shall we be more firmly convinced that "His ways are judgment and His work perfect."

It was in the year 687 that Cuthbert, the monk of Old Melrose, and the saint of Northumbria died. As the soul fled heavenwards from its worn tenement of clay, the weeping brethren round his couch poured forth the sorrow of their hearts in the psalm appointed for the evening service of that day: "O, God, Thou hast cast us off and scattered us abroad. O, turn Thou unto us again. O, be Thou our help, for vain is the help of man." Immediately on their master's death, one of their number stepped out to the summit of the rock and waved two torches, the preconcerted signal to the monks in Lindisfarne, that their father in God had passed away. From the monastery too, the same sad psalm was being wailed to heaven. It was a lamentation for the loss that had befallen them, the foreboding of the ill that was to be. That chant was the death-song of the Northumbrian church and the dirge of the Northumbrian kingdom. The overlordship, which that province had exercised for almost fourscore years (607-685), was delivered over to another. Ichabod was written upon it when King Ecgfrith died, for now its glory had departed. Ecgfrith lost his kingdom by his lust of conquest. Seeking to subdue the Picts, away north beyond the Forth, somewhere in Fife, his army was cut to pieces; he himself was slain; his possessions in our part of the country were taken from his house. After that year 685, the Tweed and the Cheviots and the Solway Firth rose up as a boundary wall between two neighbours, kin to each other in race, in religion and in history, turned them from friends into foes for the next nine centuries. As an additional consequence, the churches on this side of the border were cut off from the churches on yonder side. They suffered but did not altogether

die. They held on in their own independent way under the surveillance neither of the old power of Iona, nor of the new supremacy of Rome. The great names that succeed Cuthbert in the history of Old Melrose, such as Boniface the renowned evangelist of Germany, and Gailbald, afterwards the first bishop of Ratisbon, have only a slender, possibly only a fictitious connection with our monastery. "There was morning and there was evening, a first day," of the church's history in Scotland. The shades of night descend upon the land, and gloom almost impenetrable envelopes all things for the next four centuries. Feelings of sadness arise within our breast as we bid farewell to Aidan and Cuthbert, Eata and Boisil, and the other representatives of the golden age. In their primitive Christianity they may have been rude and ignorant, yet in spirit they were simple, earnest, and full of zeal. These qualities, which we find in the log-monasteries and rocky cells, and cannot help admiring, we do not meet again in the church for many centuries to come.

During the long and dreary winter of the following period, there were most important changes taking place in the politics of our country. It was then that the Picts and Scots, the two races which hitherto had wrangled over the possession of the land, were united into one nation. The first king of the united peoples was Kenneth, a son of that Kenneth who burned Old Melrose sanctuary in 839. On this incursion, the Scots ravaged the Saxon territory, but immediately Scots and Picts had to make joint defence against the Norwegians and the Danes, whose beaked galleys attacked the shores especially of the north and west. The times had need of religion, but were not favour-

able to its growth. The lamp of God burned dimly. The only beam in the darkness we can descry is the flickering candle of the Culdees, but the hands that hold it are almost altogether invisible. The Culdees were the successors of the Columban monks, but as to whether they were the "direct descendants" or arrivals from a foreign shore, the authorities are divided. They spring up most unexpectedly at Lochleven, at Abernethy, and Dunkeld. The name signifies, according to some, "servants of God," according to others, "men fond of retirement," hermits. They were a priestly caste, rather than a regular monastic order, each community pursuing its own life according to its own ideas. "They lived," says the chronicle of the Picts, "after the tradition of men rather than after the statutes of the fathers." They dwelt in their bee-hive cells under the discipline of a prior or master; yet, contrary to the usual custom, were permitted to marry and to hand down their property and even their office in lineal succession. They exerted a meagre influence upon the people in the midst of whom they lived, they seem to have degenerated into idleness and ignorance. Cut off from the rest of the world, yet not wholly devoted to the concerns of the other world, they became weak in faith and strong in superstition. By such slender means does the All-wise preserve His church in life. He is patient for years and centuries. He will not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax; on the contrary, He will straighten the reed and breathe upon the spark, till He cause truth and righteousness once more to arise.

The night that succeeds the one day precedes the following. So runs the Scripture, "The evening and the morning were

a first day." God closes His day not in darkness, but in light, the final stage is brightness and not gloom, the grave prepares for the rising again. The course of Nature is a constant revival, the course of history a continual reformation.

The land that had lain fallow ever since the days of Cuthbert, save in small patches like St. Andrew's and Dunkeld, was broken up again and prepared for an abundant harvest in the end of the 11th century. The bringer of the spring-time came from the sunny south, and was a woman and a queen. With her advent, we enter once more upon a season of joy and earnestness, of light and quickening. "There is perhaps," observes a historian, "no more beautiful character recorded in history than that of Margaret. For purity of motives, for an earnest desire to benefit the people among whom her lot was cast, for a deep sense of religion and great personal piety, for the unselfish performance of whatever duty lay before her, and for entire self-abegnation, she is unsurpassed, and the chroniclers of the time all bear witness to her exalted character." She was a Saxon maiden of the royal family of Edward the Confessor, received by Malcolm Canmore when she fled along with her brother from the invasion of William the Conqueror, and asked by the Scottish king to share his throne in the year 1069. She brought with her, her English culture and her holy learning, for she had been a favourite pupil of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury; she brought a pure heart and a strong yet sympathetic mind. Her husband, the fierce warrior and ruthless harrier of England, unable to read her books of devotion, kissed them fervently, and had them adorned with gold. Her household she ruled with perfect discipline, administered in

love, the education of her children was one of her especial cares. "O, my children," she would sometimes say, "fear the Lord, for they that fear Him shall lack nothing. Love Him, for His love will never fail you, and will give you prosperity in this life, and everlasting happiness with all the saints." In the cultivation of her personal piety she was most assiduous. She knew the Scripture thoroughly, she practised the precepts that she learned there. So earnest was she in mortifying the flesh by fasting and watching that she brought on an infirmity which shortened her days upon the earth. So careful also of the higher matters of the law, mercy and love, that "every morning she prepared food for nine orphan children, and fed them on her bended knees," during the day supplied the physical wants of crowds of poor people, every night in imitation of the humble service of her Master, washed the feet of six of them.

Here was new life for Scotland. The court became the home of the highest heavenly graces, as well as of the highest earthly glory. The capital of the country became another Zion, the dwelling-place of God. The stream of good influence could not but flow down to the nobles, the church, such as it was, and the lower ranks of the people. The Queen, seconded by her husband, who often acted as interpreter, addressed herself to correct the abuses she could not fail to see, determined to root out the weeds, plant new seeds, and introduce a better mode of cultivation. Accustomed to Roman observances in her youth, she considered the Celtic forms barbarous, and her own the only proper. She employed all the persuasion of her eloquence, supplemented by the authority of her position, to bring the Scottish forms into harmony with those of the universal church.

Her arguments do not always appear to us logical or conclusive, but we cannot wonder that in discussion the victory would be assigned to her, in deference to her skill, her single-hearted zeal, and queenly rank. In course of time she persuaded the monks to commence the Lenten Fast four days earlier than formerly, because Sundays, being feast days and not fast days, should not be reckoned in the total forty, to partake of the communion at Easter time, instead of holding back because of felt unworthiness, to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath by labour and abuses. Towards the anchorites she shewed great kindness, applauding their lives "in the flesh yet not according to the flesh;" and when they piously refused the gifts she wished to bestow upon them, begged from them the names of the poor and distressed whom she might relieve.

In all these holy deeds she was animated by the sincerest motives, free from all pharisaical desires to be seen of men, striving only to please her Lord. She "glorified in nothing save in the cross through which the world was crucified unto her and she unto the world." That was her last thought. The final chastening stroke from the hand of God fell on her as she lay upon her death-bed, when she learned from her son, Edgar, the tidings of her husband's death upon the battlefield of Alnwick. She lifted up her heart in praise to God, as only the Christian can do. "I give Thee thanks, Almighty God, for that Thou in Thy good pleasure hast made me to endure such deep sorrow in the hour of my departure, that thereby as I trust, I may be purified in some measure from the corruption of my sins: do Thou, Lord Jesus Christ, who through the will of the Father hast quickened the world by Thy death, O, do Thou now deliver

me." With these devout petitions breathing from her lips she peacefully expired.

While contemplating Margaret, the queen who introduced the Roman supremacy into the religion of the country, we cannot help contrasting her with Mary, the queen in whose reign it closed. We must remember they differed in their education: they differed also in their disposition. Mary won her subjects' hearts by the witchery of her beauty, Margaret by the nobility of her soul. Mary was adorned with the voluptuous graces of the later French Court: Margaret brought with her the simple manners of the earlier English. Mary, courageous in the clash of arms, Margaret, gentle and loving peace: Mary finding her chief enjoyment in the dance, Margaret in ministering to the poor and needy: the one in discussion rebuked by the rough John Knox, the other leading victoriously the clergy of her time to higher customs and better practices: the one sadly unfortunate, almost cursed, in her home life, the other blessed in her husband and her children: the career of the one full of usefulness, that of the other full of unrest: the one dying a martyr to the religion now grown old and effete, by which when it was new to the country, the other attained the rank of saint. In these two queens, Margaret, expiring tranquilly in 1093, Mary executed by the headsman's axe in 1587, we have the representatives of the beginning and the end of the Roman Catholic rule in Scotland.

Queen Margaret had six sons, and not only instilled into their minds principles of justice and of right, but also inspired them with something of her own enthusiasm for the establishment of what she considered true religion in the land. The

superiority of her southern culture and the eminence of her virtue, awoke within their breasts and the breasts of the noblest in the land, a desire to share in the same good work. The royal princes responded with much zeal, and, after their mother's death, carried forward on their own account the enterprise she had begun. One son was lay-abbot at Dunkeld. Another, Edgar, who succeeded to the throne, re-built the priory at Coldingham which had been devastated by the Danes, and instituted a kind of parish system by dedicating for its maintenance the whole town of Swinton. On his death, the kingdom was divided between the two youngest brothers, Alexander and David—the former receiving the northern portion of the country, and the honour of King; the latter, the southern portion, *i.e.*, below the Forth and Clyde, with the title of Count. Both princes continued the policy of Queen Margaret, and planned to substitute generally the parochial or diocesan system for the old monastic. Alexander founded two new bishoprics, Moray and Dunkeld, and introduced a colony of Augustinians or Black Friars to be settled at Scone. David, on his part, preferred the Benedictines, and brought a number of them over from Tiron, in France, to the abbey of Selkirk in 1113, translating them in 1128 to Kelso. He also founded a priory at Jedburgh, and, greatest work of all, restored in 1115 the church of Glasgow, which had been well nigh destroyed in the tumults of the time, and exalted it into a cathedral. These substantial beginnings he made while yet a prince. When, upon his brother's death in 1124, he was elevated to the throne, he considered his new position only a larger opportunity offered to him to further the designs his mother had so warmly cherished.

King David never received formal canonization from the church, therefore his title of Saint cannot have been bought (as is sometimes alleged) by his large donations to religious houses: it must have been accorded to him by the people in honour of the personal virtues he displayed during his long reign from 1124 to 1153. Wyntoun rhymes his praise in book vii. of his Chronykil:—

"His lyff was fowrme of all meknes;
Merowr he wes of rychtwysness;
Ensawmpill he wes of chastyté,
Mare luwand a man was nane than he."

It is not, however, so much with his personal qualities we have to do as with his work. He is notorious as "ane sair sanct for the crown," who expended so much of the royal treasure and granted so many of the royal possessions for the endowment of religious houses as to make James I. bewail his liberality. Yet is the lamentation with its implied rebuke a just one? Was not this policy the best he could have pursued for the stability and progress of his nation? Better to spend money in the spiritual instruction of his people than in warring with his neighbours; better to give the lands into the possession of the peaceful monks, than leave them to be quarrelled over by the turbulent nobles.

Besides the See of Glasgow already mentioned, he established bishoprics in Ross, in Aberdeen, and in Caithness. For a second immigration of Benedictines from France, he made homes in Dunfermline, and at Urquhart, near Elgin. For the Canons of St. Augustine he founded the Abbey of Holyrood in 1128. Towards the Cistercians he showed a special favour. One colony from Rievaulx in Yorkshire, he planted at Dundrennan

in Kirkcudbright, another in Melrose, and from the latter community sent off hives to Newbattle near Edinburgh, and Kinloss in Moray. Kelso he had founded eight years before, and it became the parent of Arbroath, Lindores, and Kilwinning. The Priory of Jedwood or Jedburgh, whose foundation also belongs to his princely days, he exalted to the dignity of Abbey in 1147. The graceful aisles of Dryburgh began to rise about 1140, though the first abbot dates his reign from 1152.

Thus, within his earthly kingdom did he seek to advance the heavenly, by planting those sanctuaries, which, in the wondrous beauty of their architecture, were fitting temples for the glory of the Lord, in the retirement of their situation, homes for the cultivation of spiritual thought and life, and in their influence upon the people, citadels of Christian soldiers, mighty to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan. Thus it came to pass that the Abbey of Melrose was built—begun in 1136, finished and dedicated ten years after (28th July, 1146) under invocation of the Virgin Mary. The neighbourhood of Little Fordel, as the village was then called, was chosen for the site rather than that of Old Melrose, where the religious house, sacred with associations of Boswell and Cuthbert, was still standing, because it was less secluded for such an important and imposing structure, because, too, it was more central for the numerous pilgrims who wended their way from all quarters, and bent their knees to lift up a prayer by "the high cross," erected where first the grey tower of the Abbey came in view. The rude peasant, the belted knight, the rough freebooter, and the gentle lady felt that near its precincts they stood on holy ground, that there dwelt pious men devoted

unto God, that if they descended to the valley and entered within these walls, they would find safety from their temporal enemies and salvation for their immortal souls, and that through the kindly offices of His servants, they would meet with Him and find forgiveness, peace, and rest.

Having traced as concisely as possible, how these monastic institutions came to be established, I should like to point out some of the benefits the country has received from their foundation. In our zealous Protestantism, we condemn all things Roman Catholic as of necessity evil, see in all priestly histories only idolatry, superstition, and error, in all monkish ceremonials the rags of the Scarlet Woman; and we grieve that so much labour and treasure should have been lavished in setting up a system of falsehood, and providing for the support of idle and often dissolute monks.

> "O, ay! the monks, the monks, they did the mischief,
> Their's all the grossness, all the superstition
> Of a most gross and superstitious age;
> May He be praised that sent the healthful tempest
> And scattered all the pestilential vapours!

How infinitely better had we retained the pure, reverent spirit of St. Cuthbert, the independence and the warmth of his Celtic monks, and been freed from the intolerance, the despotism, the selfishness, and the iniquities of these friars! To all which indignation we would reply—For everything, there is a time under the sun, a time for the exercise of authority by spiritual fathers, a time for the self-determination of the man, a time for discipline, and a time for liberty, a time, therefore, for Roman Catholicism and a time for free Protestantism, a time when the boy shakes off his leading strings and becomes his own master.

Providence makes no mistakes. God not only permitted Roman Catholicism in this country, He sent it at a certain time to do a certain work.

(1.) First, by the Roman supremacy *the Church obtained unity and organization.* The Columban monks, we saw, had lived out their day. Those of them who were not corrupted, led a hermit life in nooks like Old Melrose, with no influence upon the community around, and little intercourse, if any, with each other. The early missionary zeal of Cuthbert had died out, the land was full of unrest, through the turbulence of the greedy fighting nobles. King David sought to cope with these evils by means of his bishoprics and his abbeys. He combined several monasteries into one diocese, so that each district might be carefully superintended, he placed members of the same brotherhood of monks in different localities, that they might not live in isolation from each other, but be bound together by common ties of friendship and of faith. Melrose, for example, directed churches in Hassendean, in Cavers, and in Ettrick, gave abbots on several occasions to Dunfermline, to Cupar in Angus, and Kinloss in Moray, supplied one bishop to the far off Caithness and the famous Jocelin to the bishopric of Glasgow. Again, by introducing monks from England, David made ties of peace with the sister country—not always very sisterly; by introducing Cistercians, whose chapter or headquarters were at Clairvaux in France, and whose order embraced some twelve hundred monasteries on the continent, he suggested a conception of one far-spreading, all-embracing church, which we in those days of countless sects and many denominations so sadly miss. The unity of the Church for which our Saviour prayed was pre-

sented then in visible and concrete form, that the people might apprehend its reality and necessity. The Church was Catholic because it was universal; it was Roman Catholic, because ruled from the papal chair of Rome. There may have been historical reasons for the many divisions of the present day arising: is there any reason why so many should continue? If we have cast off that external unity which meant a cramping bondage, let us preserve, let us foster with all the greater zeal that inward unity of faith and love which Christ besought the Father to bestow, and which, though not so visible as the unity of the former time, is none the less but rather all the more emphatically real. Let us pray and labour that within the borders of our loved church in Scotland there may be cultivated that friendly intercourse which characterised it in the days of old, that instead of the modern evils of competition there be introduced the earlier blessings of co-operation, and that beneath all the differences there may exist the fundamental unity of spirit which means harmony not monotony, freedom not slavery, elasticity not narrowness, growth and not corruption, life not death.

(2.) The monasteries arose as *emphatic assertions of the religious principle.* The one desire of men in those days was the same as it is now, to gain the things of this world, only they adopted then more rough and ready methods. It was strength of muscle more than cleverness of brain that accumulated wealth. The main question among the border chiefs or other nobles was, who could fight the best and steal the most. Against these notions the grey walls of the abbeys raised a solemn protest, a solid unmistakable affirmation that there is a God above and a Heaven beyond, the need to be separated from

this world and to live for that which is to come. Not without effect, for many brave warriors sought to find peace to their consciences by gifts to the sanctuary, and to prepare for eternity by making their grave within its walls, or it might be by spending a few years in penance and prayer in one of its cells. Thus Robert de Kent in disponing the territory of Innerwic to the monks of Melrose writes: "And be it known, I have made this gift to the Church of Melrose, with myself, and the monks have granted me their cemetery and the service of a monk at my decease; and if I be free, and have the will and the power, the monks shall receive me into their convent." Poor deluded creature! some one will say, did he not read in Scripture, that a man has only to accept forgiveness, not to buy it from the Lord: that God requires no material sacrifices from men's hands, but "to do justly, to love mercy, and walk humbly day by day with him." No, he could not read these simple, gracious words, for printing had not yet been invented, the Bible was not within the people's reach. It was well that the barons should acknowledge in some way the authority of holy things, and when they were too ignorant and careless to think for themselves, should submit to tutors and governors for guidance. For Scotland seven hundred years younger than she is to-day, the Divine Teacher had to employ different methods from those that He employs now, had to state the eternal truths of justice and love, of hell and heaven, in more concrete, more material forms than now, to arouse men's attention, and gain an entrance into their hearts.

(3.) Thirdly, the monasteries *were the homes of learning.* We must remember there was no book printed in Scotland till

the sixteenth century, the century of the Reformation itself; that outside the monasteries there was almost no man who could write. In the reign of Alexander III there was but a single baron in Scotland who could sign his name. It followed that the monks were the clerks as well as the theologians, it was natural that they should become the lawyers, the judges, and later the statesmen of the kingdom. In the abbeys where they dwelt, literature was preserved and fostered. In the Scriptorium (the ruins of the Dryburgh one may still be seen) the lives of Origen and Augustine were reverently read, the treasures of Homer and of Horace enjoyed; there the gospels were laboriously copied out, and lovingly illuminated in gold and brilliant colours; there new books were conceived on divinity and ecclesiastical polity, and biographies of the saints composed; there was kept the chartulary detailing the property and possessions of the abbey, the obituary of the abbots and priors, the chronicles of all the notable events as they occurred. It is to these last mentioned documents, so carefully and patiently compiled, we are indebted for our knowledge of the history of the times. The Register of Arbroath, the Book of Dunfermline, the Book of Paisley are invaluable to the historian; and not the least important is the Chronicle of Melrose begun so early as the year 735 and continued in the new abbey down to 1250. We cannot now speak longer on this point, and would only say in brief, it is to the monasteries that we owe our learning, for they were seats of education long before John Knox established parish schools—to them we owe the preservation of our literature, our history, and our Bible.

(4.) Fourthly, the *monks cultivated personal religion.*

We know the monks cultivated the soil laboriously themselves, and made good landlords to the peasants, so that while the oft-made remark is true, they chose beautiful spots to plant their abbeys in, it is also true that they helped to beautify these spots still more by their assiduous care. We know also that they were cultivators of men's hearts, and sowers of the spiritual seed. There must be some truth in a false system, else it could never stand; there was some good in the Romish church, else it could never have lasted as it did. Without a doubt, the motives of the founders were the purest and best, the lives of the early monks were exemplary. The rules of the Cistercian order (that of Melrose) prescribed a strict and simple style for its members. Seven times a day must they attend devotional service. The first prayers were at two in the morning, the second at six, the third at nine, and so on at three hours' interval till vespers at six. Compline, or the last office, was held shortly after seven, and all retired to rest at eight. All the brethren slept in one dormitory, though in separate beds, the sacristan locked the doors, and the abbot kept the keys. No one, night or day, was allowed beyond the grounds without special permission; and then two must go together to guard good conduct and prompt good thoughts. They wore a white cassock with a black gown over it when they walked abroad, and a white one when going to church. They were allowed flesh meat in the grace-hall only on certain days; none but the sick or guests were permitted any other than brown bread. In Lent they fasted daily till six in the evening.

Mechanical rules like these could never make men holy; yet they could help, if practised with a higher aim than their

mere formal fulfilment. Few of us suffer from eating too little; the doctors say we all eat too much. Fasting has its advantages, the flesh needs to be "buffeted" (to use St Paul's expression) in order to be kept down, and allow the soul to rise. That there were sincere and pious men in the abbey is beyond all question. One only shall we mention, loved by the monks and honoured by all the people for his self-denial, his devotion and his charity—Waltheof, the second abbot. He was son of the Earl of Northampton, stepson of King David, yet when called by God, he gave up the privileges of rank, the amusements of the chase, the worldly honours the king conferred upon him, and donned the coarse habit of the monk. He was noted for the cheerfulness with which he submitted to penance, for the mildness with which he corrected the faults of others, and for his great kindness to the poor. Once, in a time of famine, four thousand starving people from different parts of Teviotdale, came crowding round the abbey gates for food. Many built huts for themselves in the woods, having no homes of their own. The grain would not be ripe for the sickle for the next three months, to slaughter the cattle would be ruinous for the future tillage. The good Waltheof arose, proceeded at the head of his monks to the granary at Eildon, and, striking his staff into a heap of wheat, prayed for a blessing to descend upon it. From Eildon he then crossed to Gattonside, where he repeated his benediction, and then the rye meant for the servants was doled out to the hungry. "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The corn lasted till the scarcity was passed, the people were saved through the goodness of God and the kindness of the abbot.

Another incident witnesses how free he was from all worldly ambition. When the bishop of St. Andrews died, the clergy and nobles of the land came in person to tell Waltheof he was elected in his place. In spite of all their pleading he would not consent to the promotion. Pointing with his finger to the spot at the door of the chapter-house which he had chosen for his grave, "Brother," said he to the abbot of Rievaulx, "I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?" Can we wonder, if God preserved the germ of faith in the country during the benighted ages of the Culdees, that when men like Waltheof arose, it should have revived, sprouted up afresh, and brought forth much fruit?

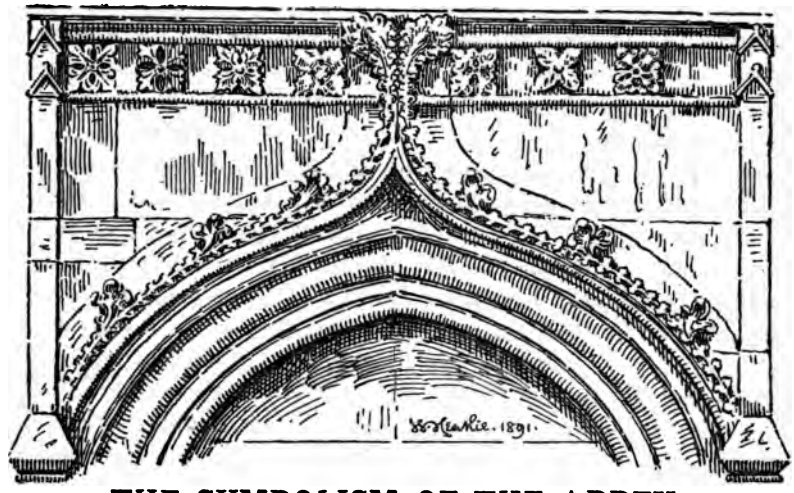
The early strictness of the monasteries, however, passed away. Internal corruption and luxury, the rebellion of the fast growing mind of the nation against its fetters, the raids of the English, the consuming zeal of the "knock-down race of Knox," scattered the monks and defaced the beauty of their sacred homes. The Reformation set in, and another volume of the history of the church in Scotland was begun. To-day the abbeys lie in ruins.

"Yet we do love these ancient ruins,
We never tread upon them but we set
Our foot upon some reverend history.
And questionless, here in this open court
Which now lies naked to the injuries
Of stormy weather, some men lie interred,
Loved the Church so well and gave so largely to it,
They thought it should have canopied their homes
Till doomsday; but all things have their end:
Churches and cities which have diseases like to men,
Must have like death as we have.

The Romish Church can never be revived in Scotland. It belonged to the boyhood of our country, was unfitted for its manhood. We, who have enjoyed liberty of conscience, the right of private judgment, freedom to worship God according to our own mind, could never submit again to the arbitrary tyranny of an infallible Pope, or the spiritual dictation of a presumptuous priesthood. We need not fear; we see too many errors in the system of the past ever to return to it in the future.

The question for us to-day is not what shall not be, but what shall be. If we condemn the errors of the olden times we must avoid them, and substitute the right. If we condemn masses and fasts as useless to purchase God's forgiveness, then must we also leave our good works, our donations to the sanctuary, our moral lives as claims upon God's grace, and trust in simplicity to Jesus Christ; if we condemn the monkish mortifying of the flesh, let us live unto the spirit; if we condemn their seclusion from the secular occupations of the world, then let us do our duty honestly, keep our lives hid with Christ in God; if we condemn the enforced celibacy of their holy people let us appreciate the happiness of our homes, protect jealously their purity, fill them with the sunshine of God's love. We have shaken off the trammels of their superstition and their ignorance: let us not use our liberty as a cloak of offence or as a reason for indifference. For us the claims of Christ abide as once for them, for us too life is real and earnest, for us there is a heaven to win and a hell to escape, for us there is a work to do in the reformation of His church, in the advancement of His kingdom, if not so extensive as Queen Margaret's and King David's, yet as important before God in the position where He

has placed us. Let us see to it therefore, that we serve our holy Master of whom we have obtained so much more enlightened a conception, with something of the same devotion that characterised these holy men of old: then while "the old order changeth, giving place to new," He will fulfil His ways through us also in our day and generation, prepare us for the larger life which the growing years have in store, honour us as workers together with Him in the fuller bringing in of that kingdom which means His glory and man's good.



THE SYMBOLISM OF THE ABBEY,

OR

LESSONS FROM ITS ARCHITECTURE.

"See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the Mount."—HEB. VIII., 5.

BY some it may be thought presumptious to apply these holy words to a building like the Abbey, by some it may be thought profane: yet they bring before us certain principles which were common to the Israelites and to the monks in the construction of their sanctuaries, and which have been lost sight of by us of later days in the erection of our churches and in the fashioning of our lives. Briefly put, the

signification of these words is this—the making of the Tabernacle is a work of art. So also, we add, should be the rearing of our churches for His worship, and the framing of our lives for His glory.

Now by the expression "a work of art" there are three ideas suggested to our minds. And the first is commonly, that such a work must be beautiful; Art is the kingdom of the beautiful. From the Old Testament history we learn how enthusiastically the Israelites fulfilled this requirement, so far as selection of material and thoroughness of execution were concerned. They poured out their treasures at the feet of Moses, decorated the sacred edifice with hangings of purple and many colours, with vessels of gold and silver, carvings of wood and brass. The Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was more splendid and became the pride of the whole nation. When the second Temple was erected after the return from the exile, the old men were moved to tears because it seemed as nothing in comparison with the first, (Ezra. iii., 12). When Jesus beheld what we may call the third Temple, that built by Herod, He too was stirred with deep emotion, foreseeing how soon its glory would be destroyed, and not one stone of its magnificence left upon another.

The Israelites gave to their sanctuary of their best, and tried to make it beautiful. It was a work of art, we say, and that is almost the last thing that could be said of the sanctuaries in general of our land. There are towns—such as our own we rejoice to say—that present pleasing exceptions to this condemnation: there are many where the places of worship can be compared to little else than barns, churches not in their form and appearance, but only in their use. While the people made

their homes comfortable and elegant, they grudged expenditure upon the house of God—for that any four walls and roof would do. Only within recent years has interest been awakened in this important matter, owing to the wider culture and the more intelligent faith. We are all familiar in our own day with the style of building of fifty and seventy years ago, severely, painfully plain in appearance, its walls glaring with whitewash, its sturdy wooden pillars, rude rafters and rough seats, wholly innocent of ornament, and with the exception of a coat of varnish, absolutely ignorant of the painter's brush. And yet we understand these barns were an improvement on their predecessors, for they were at least wind and water-tight. We learn from reliable sources that during last century the state of the churches was utterly disgraceful to any professedly God-adoring country. Says the English traveller, Pennant, writing in the reign of George III., "our Lord seems still to be worshipped in a stable and often in a very wretched one: many of the churches are thatched with heath, and in some places are in such bad repair as to be half-open at the top." In the statistical account published between 1791 and 1799, we read of certain districts where "the churches might as properly be called sheds: one in Annandale neither plastered nor ceiled, its seats in a ruinous condition." So low had religious life sunk in this generation: so different the carelessness of the men of these times from the affectionate reverence of the Israelites to whom the very stones of God's house were dear.

This apathy with regard to the sanctuary was not always the spirit displayed by the Scotch people. Go far enough back and you discover the very opposite. Passing the Covenanters

of the seventeenth century—among whom we may number that Giles Fletcher, minister of Melrose, who caused the images in the church to be demolished—these strong-minded, honest, Covenanters who in their consuming zeal identified all things savouring of ornament, with the hated English bishops, the Pope of Rome, and the devil, we come to these godly men, for they were godly men according to their knowledge, who before the corruption of the Romish Church, raised up to the glory of the Almighty those wondrous abbeys and cathedrals, whose beauty even in the midst of ruin and decay charm the eye and move the heart of all beholders.

And why, we ask, should there not be beauty in the house of God? Was it not He Himself who planted within us the power to appreciate chaste form, rich colour and harmony of parts? Are we not rendering back to Him His own as He desires, when we consecrate to Him our inborn enjoyment of the beautiful as well as our aspiration after the good and the true? "Whatsover things are lovely," says the Apostle, "take account of these things." God is to be worshipped not in ugliness or baseness but in holy beauty. To Him belongs whatever is highest, noblest, best in all our being. "See," said He "that thou make all things according to the pattern I have shewed thee in the Mount."

The beautiful must not destroy but still preserve the useful. One of the essential elements in our conception of beauty, says Mr Ruskin, is "the felicitous fulfilment of function." What is *pretty* merely, ranks very low in Art. It is those objects that remain adapted to their own special end, while set forth in the most pleasing form that excite our admiration most.

This principle is well exemplified in the Abbey. The first glance reveals the purpose it is meant to serve. You could not possibly mistake it for a castle or a mansion, a court of justice or a lecture-hall: you recognise at once it is a sacred place devoted to the worship of the Lord. It is difficult sometimes in the present day to distinguish, for the church has drawn near to the world, and the world near to the church. The spiritual fact finds concrete illustration in the buildings, the modern house of God lacks in form the clear definite expression of sacredness that glorifies the abbeys of old. It is designed not so much for worshipping God in, as for hearing the preacher's voice. It is often undistinguishable from the dwelling houses or warehouses on either side, save by a black board beside the door to announce its special use. We have known churches hired out for political and other meetings as if their being temples of the Lord were of no moment. With the Abbey it was different. It was holy unto God, consecrated, set apart. So should also the life of the Christian be, so clearly and evidently devoted unto God and the high requirements of His service, that mistake in the matter is impossible. It is not by hanging out a label on the outside, not by making an occasional pious remark or a general canting profession, that a man is holy. There should be no difficulty in recognising the fact from the immediate view of his general behaviour and the silent unobtrusive separation of his life. This is at once true art and true religion, that the structure fulfils in itself the end for which it was designed: if it does not, then no ornamentation of culture or wealth or rank can make compensation.

The best work of art expresses the highest kind of truth. Most probably the thought is arising in some mind, God may be worshipped as worthily in an ordinary hall as in a cathedral. Yes, but not as easily and readily and profoundly. Granted that the only acceptable worship is that in spirit and in truth, that which proceeds not from the lips with their pattered prayer and their soulless singing but from the heart in its pain of contrition and its joy of thankfulness, still, there is more likelihood of the mind being drawn in from the world and lifted up in sincerity to heaven, when the surroundings are also conducive to this end. There is as much danger of formalism in the worship of to-day as ever there was when beads were told and mass was sung, there is more danger of irreverence. We may approve the Quaker, who, in his hostility to all ritualism, his insistence on the spirituality of worship, keeps his head covered during service: we must condemn the man, who, in sheer want of thought, marches down the passage and only removes his hat when he has reached his pew. Not only ought we to pay at least as much respect to God as we would to any gentleman whose house we enter, but we ought also so to construct our sanctuaries that they would induce this feeling of solemnity, and help us to realise we stand within them upon holy ground. Congregationalism and Presbyterianism have always contended for simplicity of worship—so also would we, since simplicity has a beauty, a power, and a necessity all its own—we are far from advocating the restoration of images or the use of mystic letters and ceremonies. All we ask is that a church should be a church, its lines pure and chaste (as those we are glad to say of the building in which we are now met), its ornamentation quiet,

nothing that the eye may light on calculated to distract the mind from communion with God, everything impelling it consciously or unconsciously to devotion.

A work of art should be the embodiment of spiritual truths, and life an expression of moral principles. They may not be thrust forward in a glaring or dictatorial fashion, but we must feel somehow they are there, for it is by the indefinable influence of their presence we are impressed.

The pious builders of the Abbey paid no little attention to this matter, partly because in the days before painting and poetry were common, they loved to express in their architecture their thinkings about the Unseen, partly because in the days when the people had no Bible in their hands as we have now, they wished to teach them the spiritual truths necessary for faith and for salvation. They had no selfish, no meretricious aim. In their humble piety they strove to make all things according to the patterns suggested by the spirit dwelling in their breasts, tried to think in stone so as to awaken by such visible speech right notions in the peoples minds, prompt reverent worship and encourage holy lives.

To-day their labour lies in ruins, since like the tabernacle of old (Heb. ix., 1) it was a sanctuary of this world temporal and temporary, subject to decay, since also architecture as a medium of expressing thought was forced to give place to printing. The conceptions its design embodies still remain, for while the visible church changes, the invisible Christ abides for ever. As there are two periods in the history of the Jews, so there are two periods in the religious history of our country, the

earlier the time of ceremonial worship and teaching by illustration, the later that of a more truly spiritual worship, and educating by the spoken or the printed word. To the Jews the former was that of the Mosaic covenant, the latter that of Christ and His Apostles, to us in Scotland, the former was that of Romanism, the latter that of Protestantism. In this regard, we might almost imagine we were reading the history of our own land, when we alight upon Hebrews ix., 9, 10, "which things [of the Mosaic dispensation] are a parable for the time now present, being only carnal ordinances imposed until a time of Reformation." As he who stands within the Apostolic church can look back and discern the types of the Saviour's work and office in the furniture of the ancient tabernacle, so we in the present more intellectual dispensation can interpret the permanent religious truths that underlie the material forms of the old abbeys and cathedrals.

Such a study will prove both interesting and advantageous. Inasmuch as life is an art, being the embodiment in conduct of certain convictions in the mind, the expression in outward action of the inward idea, inasmuch as

> All are architects of Fate
> Working in these walls of Time

building characters and destinies to last beyond time into the eternity, it is worth our while to study the notions these holy men considered indispensable for the construction of a true life, fashioned after the heavenly pattern shewn by Jesus Christ whom they and we together honour as the perfect man and only Lord.

Let us therefore now proceed to consider more particularly the building. We confess at once it is as we behold it now, a

patchwork, a most heterogeneous pile. If any portions of the 1136 original remain, they can only be the foundations, for Edward of England practically razed it to the ground in 1322. King Robert the Bruce from his deathbed at Cardoss gave orders for its restoration, and a considerable part of the present building, the side chapels and choir, belongs to the period following his decease, 1326-1385. In the latter year Richard II. of England set fire to it, but James IV. took pity on its ruined state, and perhaps the south transept dates from this the Flamboyant period about 1444. During the next hundred years the east end was completed in the style called Perpendicular, and a third time it was desolated by the English—by Layton 1544 and Lord Hertford 1545. Thereafter no further restoration was attempted, for the Reformation soon proclaimed war against all such homes of monkery—unless we call that restoration which in reality was barbarism which shored up the northern aisle with a huge uncouth block of masonry, when the building was fitted up as a parish church in 1618.

In all which strange eventful history we may read the fluctuating fortune of many a human life, the inability to stand the attacks of foes, the difficulty of making the old to correspond entirely with the new, the hopelessness of attaining in this life at least to full-orbed perfection. To such despondent inferences the Abbey itself supplies the antidote, for in the beautiful legend on the scroll on the south transept, "When Jesus comes, the shadows of the world will cease to be;" then all clouds of disappointment will be dispersed in glorious light, then to the brave trusting heart full satisfaction will be granted.

Let us stand for a moment in imagination at the south-west or south-east corner of the churchyard and take a general view of the outside of the building. All the styles of architecture we find exemplified in its construction are species of one style called Gothic. Now the distinguishing characteristic of this Gothic is, the tendency of all its lines to run upwards. Look at the windows for example, the arches narrow gracefully to a point, in the Flamboyant south transept the tracery struggles heavenward like a flame, in the Perpendicular east oriel the tall slender mullions or shafts have become perfectly erect. Every detail causes the eye that gazes on it to ascend, piers, pinnacles, flying buttresses all produce the same elevating effect. In the old pagan temples the impression was different. There the eye found rest at once, for it beheld strong massive pillars with the roof laid square upon them: the evident intention of these pillars so solid and substantial was to support a weight. When the new religion came, the architecture of the sanctuaries underwent a change. No longer did the soul remain pressed down upon the earth, but sprang heavenwards glad to be free, eager to explore the unknown heights. For see, the pillars are no longer now pressed down by a heavy horizontal burden: they leap up beyond themselves and with a graceful gradual curve meet in the keystone of the arch. Substantial still, they have acquired a certain air of lightness, combine a feeling of joy with their former severity and earnestness. The dull sense of weight is gone. They rise spontaneously and develop naturally as the branches upwards and outwards from the stem of the tree, forming no burden but a glory; they interlace with all the beauty of the forest glade.

Is not Gothic architecture the fitting embodiment of Christian truth? Is there not here expressed at once the duty and the desire of the Christian soul, nay, of the soul of every man living within range of the glad gospel? Upwards is its cry. "This earth is not my home; pleasant as it is, it cannot satisfy the soul that is immortal. I am made for Thee, O Lord: Thy Son hath said it and my whole being echoes it is true. I shall never find rest until I find it in Thee. I am oppressed, I am weighed down, yet I must up. My burden is heavy, yet I must climb. Thou risen and ascended Jesus, Thou dost beckon me to the heavenly places where Thou art seated at the right hand of the throne, Thou sayest it is possible for me also to rise, wilt Thou not help me to attain?"

The pointed architecture of the Abbey proclaims the natural aspiration of the soul towards heaven, it provokes in consequence the question, how may such aspiration be realised? In every heart not utterly debased there is the longing to be better, the prayer to be holy. If the Abbey by its soaring lines express this upward tendency, should it not also suggest the way in which it may be fulfilled? And so it does. The ground plan of the building justifies the elevation and the ground plan is *a cross*. At the high-altar we may suppose the head of the crucified Lord to rest, while the arms are stretched out on the two wings north and south.

The cross, the response of God to the aspirations of mankind! The cross, the foundation of the holy life! It is strange yet it is true, and the longer it is contemplated, the more really true it is seen to be. Ah! it is a commonplace of our religion, yet think again and yet again every time you see the Abbey, and

you will realise its profound and far-reaching significance. Thou dost long for thy burden of guilt to be removed? Here on the cross is the Burden-bearer, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all," and therefore does He say "Man thy sins are forgiven thee." Thou dost long to rise above this lower selfish world? Thou thyself must take up the cross, to ascend thou must descend, with Him thou must die unto sin and live unto righteousness, with Him thou must sacrifice thyself for the help and benefit of others.

Christians are apt to lose sight of this latter aspect of the truth. They reason often, "We are forgiven, we are safe, we shall go to heaven when we die." That is a delusion and a lie, if it means it matters not how they live now. To be with Him at the last we must be like Him now, to be like Him we must make His life ours, and His life was a continual cross. So does the Bible teach, so also did the monks of old. For lest the worshippers in the Abbey should forget the sufferings of the Lord, they repeated the fact and re-repeated it in different portions of the building. For instance high above the altar on the boss of the arched roof, there is depicted Calvary, in the window on the right hand side there stand the three crosses again: in the north transept there is held aloft the crown of thorns, in the south transept on the outside, the doctrine of the sacrifice is set forth in so many words upon the scroll "He suffered because He willed it." Would that Christians, would that all men might learn here is the ground plan of the true life, that Christ in very deed is the perfect man, that Christ is the crucified, and perfected only because He was the crucified: that therefore only as we identify ourselves with Him, endure

as He did, can we follow Him to glory, make life worth living in this world and have life everlasting in its fulness in the world which is to come.

After this summary contemplation from without let us now proceed within. The western portion of the nave is wholly destroyed and along with it the principal door. This, one of the monks might have said, should remind us of the words of Christ "I am the Door," and points again to the fact that only through Him is admission to the church, that is, the right and true life, possible. Yet again was the same idea suggested by the baptismal font we should have found immediately on our right hand, since regeneration is the indispensable beginning of sanctification. As we look straight forward we feel ourselves in the quiet solemnity of a temple, separated from the world, with the peace of God breathing on our hearts. Above us rises the lofty roof awaking a sense of awe and reverence, by our side are the chapels where several devout souls may be praying, teaching us we are not alone in our endeavours after holiness, bidding us rejoice in the communion of the saints. Before us stretches the long nave, type, said the monks, of the church militant, shut off by the heavy rood-screen from the choir and chancel, symbol of the church triumphant. How may we pass thither to where Christ dwells at the high altar, our High Priest and Saviour? "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." And ere we pass under the low arch, we glance upwards and discover again the Saviour's face and close beside it the passion-flower, for we shall need His forgiveness and the merits of His passion unto the end, till after the valley of the shadow has been traversed, we shall join the choir triumphant and add our

voices to the glad anthem of eternal praise—"Worthy the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing."

Let us glance for a moment at the windows. Through their stained glass the rays of the outside sun give only a subdued light, for it is not from the external world of Nature but from the inner world of Spirit that the illumination of the Christian comes. They stand therefore (so interpreted the monks) for the doctrines of the Church. There, for instance on the right, are two whose tracery may symbolise the Trinity or Trinity in Unity—a truth concerning the being of God revealed by Christ alone, a truth impossible to comprehend yet pregnant with meaning. Were the Unitarian view correct, then God throughout eternity would be a lonely God and a selfish God, not a God of Love as we know Him to be (since love can exist only between two), unable therefore to redeem the world through a Son, if indeed it were possible for Him ever to create a world, unable to sanctify it by a Holy Spirit. There, as we already mentioned, on the north transept is the Crown of Thorns, the most artistic, the most beautifully wrought out conception in the Abbey. Does not light also stream through that? It is sharp and pointed, for it pierced the brow of the meekest, gentlest, kindliest man that ever lived: yet it is a crown, mark you, for it was worn by the Saviour, the Son of God, whose glory it was that He suffered, who is a true king ruling the hearts of men not by dignity but by love. There, behind the high altar, appears the curious and elaborate "east oriel," perfectly unique in its construction. That there was any definite symbolic intention in its design is very doubtful, yet

may not its slender shafts, so strong in themselves that they have withstood the fretting tooth of Time unto this day, so dexterously interlaced with each other by stony bands, suggest the various doctrines of the faith in their mutual connection and relation, each able to stand independent, yet rendered the more stedfast and made to appear the more beautful when bound and woven harmoniously together. For this is the principal window, likely the latest in its date. It may well therefore point the final moral, that no truth of God, far-reaching and important as it may be, must be viewed in isolation from its kindred, just as no verse of scripture may be cut out from its context or broken off from allied passages in other parts. It is in the light of the wide, the varied, the universal God that we shall see light and apprehend each several and particular truth.

Besides these objects of interest in the frame-work of the fabric, the church was adorned with images and statues and carvings within and without, partly through the same instinct that leads us to decorate our homes and relieve the bareness of the walls, partly to bring certain personages and certain notions to the minds of the worshippers. Owing to the enthusiastic zeal of the Reformers and the stone-throwing propensity of the boys at play, many have been destroyed. We can infer those lost from those remaining. The favourite subjects for the pious artist's chisel were the Saviour, His Virgin Mother, and the twelve Apostles. Pedestals for these may be seen in the north transept, niches also above the south door. We have St. Peter still with his book and the keys of heaven, St. Paul with his sword, in early life the instrument of his persecution, in later days, of his martyrdom. Above the nave on the outside we

have the Virgin and Child; not far off, St. Andrew and the cross on which he died. By such means was the worshipper made to feel that in his strenuous race he was not solitary and alone, but "compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses," who themselves had lived and suffered and died in faith.

While he might contemplate the forms of such holy persons with pleasure and with profit, with the hardened and impenitent on whom the ban of the church has fallen he should hold no company whatever. Therefore are they expelled to the outside of the building. Their dwarfed, misshapen, hideous figures may be discovered as if hurrying from the eaves. They are depicted as animals and monsters: they serve practically as gargoyles to drain the water from the roof. If we had eyes to see beneath the fair appearances of many men upon the earth, should we not behold their souls diminutive, deformed, ugly, bestial? From the society of such the Christian must withdraw, "evil communications corrupt good manners." He will withdraw because his nature has no true affinity with theirs, his likings lie in the opposite direction. He prefers the company of the strong Apostles, the pure saints, and his Saviour. With their thoughts should his mind be stored, with their virtues should his life be adorned.

Besides these figures of men and animals there is another species of ornamentation in the Abbey, for which it is justly celebrated. I mean the carved leaves and flowers which are so profusely scattered over its masonry. Upon the capitals of the pillars, along the rood-screen, above the arcade of the cloisters, this decoration is especially to be noticed. In originality of design, in variety of treatment, in grace and delicacy, these bands and wreaths are confessedly unsurpassed.

Artists are ambitious often to bring high conceptions down from heaven and strange objects from a distance to lend an air of grandeur and magnificence to the fabric they are erecting. It might have been forgiven the monks if they had soared above the clouds for inspiration; "See," said He, "that thou make all things according to the pattern that I shewed thee in the Mount." Where did they find their patterns? Not in the Bible descriptions of the ancient tabernacle, not in the famed lotus and acanthus ornaments of classic architecture handed down in books, but in the plants of their own garden and through the observation of their own eyes. They took their designs direct from the handiwork of God, in what was to others mean and common they saw a beauty worthy of a place in the temple of their Lord. Of the curly-green they made a chapter for their most prominent pillars, houseleeks and thistles, leaves of ash and oak, ferns and fir-cones, they fitted into a frieze whose squares are a series of sonnets in stone.

To the thoughtful mind these garden emblems will suggest at once the lesson of humility and the truth also that in God's sight there is nothing little or insignificant. They convey a third idea, moreover, that is valuable in itself, valuable also in connection with the history of monasteries and for the explanation of its fall. It is a general accusation against the monks, that in retiring to the cloister they were guilty of a false separation from the world, refusing the responsibilities and evading the duties of this life, in order selfishly to save themselves from the evil of that which is to come. The accusation is in large measure just. They were extreme in their emphasis of the one aspect of the truth to the forgetting of the other. That

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however a dim consciousness of their mistake began to dawn upon their minds is witnessed, we may well believe, in the consecration of these lowly plants to the adornment of His temple. It is a partial recognition of the fact that the world is not completely the possession of the devil as they imagined and as also they taught, but that by the Almighty God were all things made and pronounced at their creation to be very good. It was through the exaggerated denial of the world that the Roman Catholic Church became corrupted, it was in order to give the various interests of this life their place, and vindicate for temporal concerns their proper rights, that the Protestants rebelled.

We say the truth of these humble flowers is of permanent value, for the mistake the monks made is prevalent in our own day, anti-Romanist as we are. The principle has still to be proclaimed that there is nothing of God's hand common or unclean, that secular things are not for that reason sinful things, that a worldly calling may be and ought to be a spiritual vocation. While on the one hand the ground-plan of the holy life must be a cross, through which the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world, on the other, by the very fact that we are redeemed by that cross, the world is restored to us; since "we are Christ's," "all things are ours." The believer is not taken out of the world, rather does he return to it with new zest. Since he has become a new creature in Christ Jesus, the world is made new to him. He views it now in the light of Calvary. He sees all its concerns are under God, its misfortunes and its evil work together for good. He sees that Christians are not their own to do as they please, but bought with a price

whether they acknowledge the fact or not. (1. Cor. vi., 19, 20). He himself is separate from the world in spirit, because he has the spirit of Christ, and not of the world which is opposed to Christ. He regards it therefore with the eyes of Christ so far as that is possible for the finite sinful man to do. And oh! the difference it makes. These possessions of yours are God's gifts to be accepted thankfully and to be used unselfishly, these duties are God's commands to be fulfilled heartily as to his glory. The little things you overlooked—the curly-green, the oak leaf and the ash are His: the surroundings you despise, the situation you are tired of because it is so small and so irksome, belong to Him: the common tasks, behind the counter, in the fields, or among these cups and saucers are matters of His care. See that you find God there, and through His spirit you will find also the patterns for the adornment of His temple. The monks were wrong in that they acknowledged only half the truth. There is need for retirement and communion with Christ, there is need for the Christian abiding in the world. There is need for prayer, there is more need for work. The Christian is the true man of the world; to Him there is nothing secular save sin.

We have thus sought to vindicate the Abbey's claim to beauty in its highest sense, not merely as a structure pleasing to the eye, but as the embodiment in the manner most natural and appropriate to its material and purpose, of the loftiest spiritual truths. We have not read sermons into the stones, but found them there written by the pious builders of six hundred years ago. We have omitted many details, twisted or done violence to none. We have seen that as a whole it is a

compendium of the Christian life. Its silent eloquence proclaims at once the strictness and the richness of the character built upon the one foundation. It shows by the upward tendency of its lines that we must ascend above the lusts of the flesh and the enticements of the world to higher privileges and enjoyments, by its cruciform design that the ground plan of such a heaven-seeking life must be the cross, by its divisions into nave and chancel that we must make progress from the church militant to the church triumphant till we reach at last the place where Christ dwells in the glory, by its windows whence we may obtain our light, by its statues within with whom we should associate, its hideous forms without whose company we should avoid, by its ornamentation how our life is to be adorned by the use of all things that are God's upon this earth and a humble consecration of the smallest to His service.

We cannot close our meditation on the venerable sanctuary without briefly noticing the spirit which animated the old monks in this their building for time, and which should distinguish us also in our building for eternity.

One feature is most obvious, namely, *their thoroughness.* It is a common remark concerning our forefathers' masonry—there is no work like it now-a-days. We doubt if such a statement is absolutely true, it would be a pity if it were. Beyond all question there is much sham and shoddy—we need no stern Carlyle to prophecy us that: in the Abbey on the other hand, the workmanship is careful, honest, and thorough. Look at the canopies above the niches, or the capitals on the pilasters of the cloister doorway. The depth of the carving is not suggested, the chisel has pierced right through. Look again at

the carving in the most obscure corners, high up where no eye of the worshipper could criticise details, or outside upon the tower and visible only from the roof, and you will find the several parts are as finely finished as if they had been meant to occupy a prominent position. Look yet again at the mortar by which the stones have been cemented. It is as hard and solid as the stones themselves: had it not been so, parts of arches overhanging with a dangerously threatening aspect, would have fallen ignominiously years ago. And why this thoroughness? The reason is not far to seek. The Abbey was not built *to sell*, but *to honour God*. It was a work of faith and a labour of love, performed in glad obedience to the Master who commanded "See that ye make all things as I have shewed you." The same temper is required to-day: in matters temporal, as the Scripture saith, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," in things religious, for God asks us to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul and strength and mind. The chief business of our threescore years and ten existence is not to make money, therefore high prices and large profits can never be the test of a tradesman's worth, but the *quality of the work* he puts out from his hand. The chief aim of the religious life is not to stand well in the opinion of society, therefore the respectable outward profession of Christianity is not the test of a good man in the sight of God, but the indwelling presence of the spirit of Christ. The man who is wanted to-day is the Christian (for the Christian is confessedly the best type of man) who carries his Christianity right through, lives calmly independent of his neighbour, but reverently fearful of his God, turns out genuine conscientious work, no matter

whether it is to be seen of men or visible only to the eye of the Almighty Master.

". . . . . Better far
Pursue a frivolous trade by serious means
Than a sublime art frivolously."

Akin to this thoroughness of the monks is their *contentment with obscurity.* Their work is their witness, the product of their toil their testimonial. They put themselves into their labour and let it speak for them. In the words of no less famous a man than Mr Gladstone, "It has been well observed as a circumstance full of meaning that no man knows the names of the architects [still less of the actual builders] of our cathedrals. They left no record of themselves upon the fabrics, as if they would have nothing there that could suggest any other idea than the glory of God to whom the edifice was devoted for perpetual and solemn worship: nothing to mingle a meaner association with the profound sense of His presence: or as if in joy of having built Him a house, there was no want unfulfilled, no room for the question whether it is good for a man to live in posthumous renown." The remark may not be literally true of every sanctuary in Scotland, it is true of our Abbey. For John Mordo whose name is inscribed upon the wall of the south transept was no more than an overseer or clerk of works.

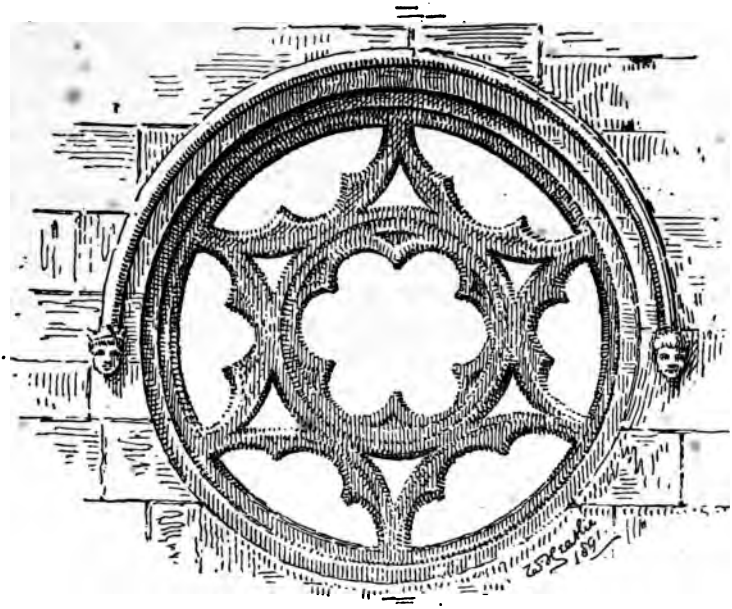
Humility is a hard lesson for proud men to learn, yet it is indispensable for real success. It is the first essential of our religion, the teaching of the cross. Christ made Himself of no reputation and was obedient. Christ *gave* Himself. Sink yourself therefore in your work and let that stand. The work

to which the Almighty God has called you is the principal concern, forget your *self* in it. That was what Christ did; therefore also, says this epistle, is He highly exalted, since for the joy of doing His duty as the heavenly Father had laid it on Him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Be anxious about yourself and pride and vanity will spoil your best efforts: lose sight of yourself and your work will be of the best. For he that would save himself must lose himself.

To-day the Abbey stands before us, in spite of the desolation wrought by southern torches and Puritanical axes, in spite of the wasting weather of six hundred years, as if it meant to maintain its solemn beauty for many centuries to come. And why? Chiefly because of the good material and good workmanship with which it was constructed. Will our work stand? "The day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire, and the fire itself shall prove every man's work of what sort it is." The holy words awake fear and trembling, yet we may have confidence and assure our hearts before Him. If our life is built upon Christ, the one and only foundation, constructed of ordinary duties faithfully done, and with a single eye to His glory, then its labour will abide and all the fires of hell will not consume it. It will be a work of art, not pretty to be praised of men, not it may be, polished and refined, yet humbly made according to the pattern shewn us in the mount, acceptable as an offering to the great Master-builder. It may be incomplete, it may be partially ruined, yet if it breathes the spirit of devotion to His service, He will own and honour it.

God grant that we may consider these things and not

carelessly imagine if we keep ourselves comfortable in this world anything will do for God, but that rather we make His "Well done, good and faithful servant," our one coveted word of praise; God grant that as we discern in the Abbey serenity as well as stability, grace as well as strength, we may combine in our lives true joy with our earnestness, and repose with our endeavour, inasmuch as we trust in Him who is Almighty and All-gracious, our strength and our salvation; above all that unmistakeably we may consecrate our labours unto Him, expressing clearly and quietly in our daily walk and conversation those heavenly truths which He reveals to us by His Spirit, and thus fulfilling the end for which we were created. "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it."



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